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New York

President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 10 *(continued)*

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/1)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): Members will recall that the Secretary-General presented his report at the 7th plenary meeting, on 21 September.

Mr. Ramaker (Netherlands): In his report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General does not only provide us with a frank account of the failures and successes of the United Nations in confronting questions of conflict, peace and development; his report is also a catalogue of sensible suggestions to tackle these issues more effectively in the future.

The Secretary-General outlines a vision of how in the future the Organization should deal with the complexities of a community of increasingly independent States. Its centrepiece is his assumption that the United Nations should play a vital role in this global process of change. We could not agree more, and look forward to the proposals the Secretary-General intends to submit in this regard to the Millennium Assembly.

For our part, we are ready to contribute to a strong and effective Organization that can lead us well prepared into the next century.

We welcome the strong case that the Secretary-General makes for focusing international efforts on the prevention of conflict. After all, pursuing the post facto solution of conflicts, which has been the practice so far, is much more costly in terms of both human suffering and material losses.

Such a preventive policy is an ambitious undertaking. It requires a broad approach, integrating political and security instruments with longer-term development and medium-term reconstruction and rehabilitation activities as well as short-term relief emergency assistance.

With the Secretary-General, we believe that the Security Council can play a pivotal role in such a comprehensive strategy. It would require the Council not only to pay systematic attention to the political and military aspects of crises. It would also have to address all those formidable threats to human security beyond naked violence and aggression. Poverty, ethnic tensions and natural disasters equally threaten the human environment as root causes of many conflicts.

In this context, the Secretary-General's reference to the potential of Article 65 of the Charter allowing the Security Council to request information and assistance from the Economic and Social Council is an interesting one and should be pursued or further explored.

The Secretary-General's report is a strong antidote to complacency among Member States with regard to the

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challenges of development. We fully share the Secretary-General's concern that, while a large proportion of humanity still faces miserable living conditions, the flow of aid to developing countries continues to decline. Equally disconcerting is the increasing tendency among donors to earmark aid and ignore the real needs of recipients.

From this rostrum, I can only assure the Secretary-General that my country will stick to its self-imposed aid target of 0.8 per cent of its gross domestic product.

My country firmly believes in the value of multilateral development channels. They, as it were, guarantee a — balanced distribution of aid. We can, therefore, wholeheartedly subscribe to the Secretary-General's claim that the United Nations does have an added value as a truly universal development institution.

Consequently, the Netherlands intends to increase its contribution to multilateral development cooperation. The decision to do this, I freely admit, has also been inspired by the reforms and innovations that the Secretary-General has initiated in the domain of United Nations development activities.

However, we harbour no illusions that even generous aid could be the sole vehicle for social and economic change. On the contrary, the most important contribution in this regard consists of national resources and financial means. In our view, development strategies should primarily focus on maximizing the impact of sound national policies and good governance, leading to sustainable development and favourable conditions for attracting private investment.

In the humanitarian field, we welcome the reorganization of the Secretariat resulting in the establishment of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Under the skilful leadership of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations system is steadily refining and improving its capacity to respond whenever and wherever man-made or natural disasters strike.

Maybe this is the moment and the place to recall the debate a few days ago in the Security Council on protection for humanitarian workers. It is indeed essential that such protection be provided for staff who often have to work in extremely dangerous situations.

It is, of course, no coincidence that during the general debate that took place in his Hall over the previous two weeks almost all heads of State, heads of Government and heads of delegation addressed the issue of globalization. After all, in his report the Secretary-General gave us some compelling reasons to engage in an ongoing discussion on how to deal with this phenomenon, which affects all of us in one way or another.

Indeed, this subject has now been put firmly on the United Nations agenda. It is important that all organs of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, which are at this very moment meeting in Washington, develop a joint approach towards the consequences of this process by sharing information and analyses and by pursuing consistency and complementarity in their policies. The immediate negative consequences — marginalization of social groups and of least developed countries — require our special attention.

The Secretary-General rightly stresses that the promotion of human rights should not be treated as something separate from the Organization's other activities. He qualifies this as a common thread running through all of those activities. We support this view. Fifty years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it has become more and more clear that a human rights policy cannot stop at standard-setting and declaratory statements: it must encompass early warning, prevention and remedying of human rights violations. Only an integrated policy in the fields of peace and security, development and human rights can yield results. For that reason, we will continue to contribute to the implementation of this approach, which the Secretary-General has so eloquently outlined in his report.

At the same time, it must be clear that within these integrated policies the international legal system itself has to be accorded its proper weight. We share the optimism of the Secretary-General about the increasing awareness of the need to base the international order on legal norms and rules. The International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague and the International Tribunal for Rwanda have been contributing, within their mandates, to the noble efforts to end a global culture of impunity. We trust that the International Criminal Court in due course will play a similar role.

In our view, the United Nations, in a number of significant ways, is quite on track with the reforms that the Secretary-General initiated last year. Indeed, much has already been achieved, and we agree with the

Secretary-General that the United Nations family is today acting with greater unity of purpose and coherence of effort than it did only a year ago. We are convinced that, given this progress, the United Nations family and Member States alike will support reform as an ongoing process enabling mankind, at any given point in time, to deal effectively with evolving global issues.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for the thoughts set out in his report on the work of the Organization during the period of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly. We share his vision of the role of the United Nations for the twenty-first century. Ours will be a globalized and interdependent world.

Since the mid-1990s, globalization has been the engine of economic dynamism, of the liberalization of markets, of increased flows of investment and of the communications revolution. Developing countries have carried out profound reforms so that they could be integrated into this new state of affairs. We agree with the Secretary-General that the challenge we face is not to resist globalization, but to take advantage of its positive effects and neutralize its adverse consequences.

Facts show that the economic prosperity of recent years exists side by side with extreme poverty. One fifth of humanity must live on just one dollar a day. Yet the total volume of official development assistance has been constantly decreasing.

Because of its universal nature and its broad economic, social and political mandate, the United Nations has the capacity and legitimacy to propose action that would make it possible for globalization to benefit everyone and to encompass countries and societies that have remained on the fringes of the process. We therefore value the development assistance provided by United Nations funds and programmes to eradicate poverty and to promote social development, sustainable development, good governance and the rights of women.

Institutional reform within the United Nations should make it possible to take action on the new realities engendered by globalization. In our view, that is the central idea of the report of the Secretary-General, and we entirely agree with it. The United Nations must be the voice of the majority, the voice of the smallest and weakest — who in an unregulated world seem to have no agenda that represents their interests.

Among today's global problems, environmental degradation in its various forms requires an urgent response from Governments and from civil society. Argentina understands this challenge and is convinced that isolated actions are inadequate to address global problems such as climate change. We welcome the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and we are proud that from 2 to 13 November Argentina will shall host the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to that Convention.

In a globalized, interdependent world, the protection and promotion of human rights is an inseparable element of international peace and security. Extreme poverty and civil conflicts sometimes make us lose sight of individual freedoms. That is why the promotion of human rights must not be viewed in isolation from the other activities of the United Nations, but rather as an element common to all of them, in particular to conflict-prevention and the consolidation of peace and development.

Just as we share the common task of promoting and protecting human rights, we must also take determined action against drug-trafficking and terrorism. The special session of the General Assembly on the drug problem and the adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings are concrete examples of joint action to deal with global threats. We also see such joint action in the sphere of humanitarian assistance: since its establishment, the "white helmets" initiative has sought to create awareness in the international community of the need for joint action. It is disgraceful that this spirit of solidarity should be frustrated when needy people are prevented from receiving humanitarian assistance and when there are attacks against international personnel responsible for distributing that assistance.

The maintenance of international peace and security is the irreplaceable role of the United Nations. If that responsibility is not shouldered, no other activities can be carried out effectively. We agree with the Secretary-General that along with conflicts between States, natural disasters, ethnic tension, systematic violations of human rights and grave humanitarian emergencies are all sure sources of instability that can disrupt peace and security throughout a region.

These conflicts require of the Security Council a new sensitivity, which can be produced only by a more direct awareness of the realities of the countries concerned and of the political, social, economic and

humanitarian circumstances where those conflicts are taking place. There is thus a need for greater transparency in the work of the Council, closer contact with the General Assembly and a frank dialogue with the parties to conflicts and with troop-contributing countries. In this connection, we must consider in detail the Secretary-General's proposal to establish cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council on the basis of Article 65 of the Charter.

Disarmament plays a central role in the area of peace and security. We share the Secretary-General's concern regarding recent nuclear tests. At the same time, we view hopefully the declarations made by India and Pakistan with regard to signing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. I am pleased to announce that on 24 September our Congress approved that Treaty, which will soon be ratified.

Another positive development is the adoption in Ottawa of the Convention banning anti-personnel mines, which Argentina signed in December 1997.

Argentina also supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a means to achieve the gradual denuclearization of the planet, and resolutely supports the initiative aimed at declaring the southern hemisphere an area free of nuclear weapons.

With regard to the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), plus Bolivia and Chile it is worth mentioning, the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials and the Ushuaia Declaration, which establishes a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and which contains a decision to move towards declaring the MERCOSUR region an area free of anti-personnel landmines.

In his annual report the Secretary-General emphasizes the fact that the number of United Nations personnel assigned to peacekeeping operations has decreased since 1990. Nevertheless, this does not mean that we live in a safer world. Peacekeeping structures must always be available for unforeseen deployments. We believe that the lack of financial resources must not restrict this principal mandate of our Organization.

Argentina, which is the eighth largest troop-contributing country and this year is celebrating the fortieth anniversary of its participation in peacekeeping operations, once again renews its commitment to those operations.

In addition, Argentina is part of the Rapid Deployment Brigade and the stand-by arrangements system. It maintains its troops at a high level of training and offers both Argentine and foreign officers courses at its training centre. During his recent visit to Buenos Aires the Secretary-General honoured the centre with his presence.

The system of collective security and the rule of law have been strengthened by the recent creation of the International Criminal Court. We completely agree with the Secretary-General's assessment regarding the importance of civil society in the process of creating that Court. We would like to pay special tribute to the Coalition for an International Criminal Court, which channelled the efforts of hundreds of non-governmental organizations and promoted a permanent and fruitful dialogue with Governments.

The summary which I have just given reflects Argentina's commitment, and that of Latin America, to the United Nations and to the decisions adopted by the General Assembly. That commitment will be strengthened as today's uncertainty in the international arena requires a more energetic and assertive Organization for the achievement of the purposes of the Charter.

Mr. Pawar (India): Permit me to compliment you, Mr. President, on the skill with which you are conducting the work of the fifty-third session.

May I also thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization, which is the subject of today's discussion, and compliment him on its quality. I will address myself to only a few of the many themes which he has covered in this report.

We believe that all Member States must work together to strengthen the United Nations, make its functioning more democratic and representative and ensure, through it, that we are able to harness for the common good the forces and energies released by the end of the cold war and by the momentum in global economic interaction. It is only the United Nations that can evolve, define and promote a comprehensive and responsive universalist agenda which will meet the challenges of the next century. The Secretariat obviously has a critical role to play. On the one hand, led with distinction by the Secretary-General, it must in its work faithfully reflect the priorities set by the Member States and transmitted through the intergovernmental mandates; on the other

hand, it is our responsibility to give the Secretariat the resources to do the work that we have assigned it.

We applaud the Secretary-General's vision of the Organization, which places disarmament near the centre of its mission of peace and development. However, we are disappointed that it appears from the report that what preoccupies the United Nations is still non-proliferation and perhaps the reduction of nuclear weapons, not their total elimination. Even now, with the cold war part of history, the international community has been unable to come to grips with the fundamental global problem that more than 35,000 of these weapons are held in the armouries of the nuclear-weapon Powers, with the rest of the world having no say in whether or not they will draw down these stocks and, if so, at what pace.

What India wants, and what the Non-Aligned Movement wants, is not a leisurely reduction of nuclear weapons, accompanied by the upgrading and strategic modernization of arsenals, but their elimination, not in an impossibly distant future, but within a short time frame, informed by a sense of urgency and political commitment. We have stressed from this podium many times the centrality of promoting nuclear disarmament to safeguard our collective future. We do so again. This goal should now be within our grasp. We believe that, in accordance with the principles and priorities of the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament, the United Nations has the foremost responsibility to promote nuclear disarmament, and this should be both articulated and pursued among its highest priorities.

As the Secretary General has noted, peacekeeping cannot but continue to be an important area of the work of the United Nations. We agree with the report that cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements whose mandate permit them to play such a role can be useful in peacekeeping operations. However, the United Nations cannot possibly either cede or subcontract its authority in peacekeeping to any lesser body, nor become an instrument for countries or regional organizations to promote agendas which are not those of the general membership.

A word on sanctions. The report welcomes the concept of smart sanctions. However, the record has shown that for many countries eager to impose sanctions, smart sanctions are those which cause the least pain to those who impose them and frequently cause extreme suffering to the often innocent populations of the target countries. We have always said that sanctions are a blunt instrument. They must be used sparingly and after the most careful consideration by the international community.

The report states that the United Nations has "started to embrace a new holistic concept of security" and goes on to say that, following from this, the role of the Security Council should also be broadened. This is a matter that requires very careful consideration. For years, it has been widely recognized that the security of nations, and international peace, has multiple dimensions. This indeed was why, several years ago, the United Nations commissioned studies on the linkages between disarmament and development. But it is a completely different matter to argue therefrom that as a result it is the Security Council that should assume an expanded role. On the contrary, this holistic concept of security can be properly addressed only in a body like the General Assembly, with a universal membership and a general mandate.

We note with interest the reference in the report to the "expression of global people power", which was made manifest in recent multilateral negotiations. The negotiations on the Statute of the International Criminal Court have been referred to as one of these instances, where individuals and groups promoted a common cause "supported by world public opinion". Again, the United Nations should tread with caution. In countries that are home to contain two thirds of the world's population, the negotiations on the International Criminal Court did not raise a ripple; world public opinion was not engaged.

Also, the negotiations themselves were in many ways a travesty. Delegations were subject to enormous pressure from non-State actors; the freedom of Governments to negotiate was constrained, and the discussions less than transparent. At a critical stage in the negotiations, some Member States received unusual interventions from the Secretariat. And requests from States that represent the majority of the world's population were brushed aside because they were not politically convenient to those described as the like-minded. These are developments we would caution against. The Secretariat of the United Nations properly functions in promoting mandates given to it by the general membership and not in anticipating them.

We cannot achieve a durable and just peace unless there is a transformation of a world order which works inexorably against the interests of the poorer countries. The Secretary-General has clearly underlined that the challenge of development remains paramount in this

world, where one fifth of humanity is forced to fend for itself on less than a dollar a day. It is therefore saddening to observe the steady decrease in the importance of the operational activities of the United Nations, with a relatively modest $5.5 billion being made available for development assistance through the United Nations. No real progress has been made to fund United Nations funds and programmes on a secure, predictable, assured and continuous basis, commensurate with the increasing needs of the developing countries.

India is one of the largest contributors to the core resources of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and a significant contributor to those of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). We hope that the developed countries will also increase their contributions to united and apolitical resources for development. At the same time, the reforms undertaken by the United Nations funds and programmes in the context of funding strategies should preserve the essential character of United Nations assistance, which must continue to be neutral, impartial, given as grants and based on the priorities of recipient countries. The United Nations development assistance framework must be approved by recipient Governments to ensure that it corresponds to and reflects national priorities. We commend the excellent work undertaken by UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Food Programme. They should continue to focus on their mandates, not divert their scarce resources into activities that are better conducted by other agencies of the United Nations system.

India accords the highest importance to the provision of humanitarian assistance which fully respects the guiding principles laid down by the General Assembly in resolution 46/182. We welcome the streamlining of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the efforts of the Emergency Relief Coordinator to engage the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in proactive and collaborative efforts to deal with a limited number of key issues. We are concerned, however, that the lack of predictable resources for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, more than 60 per cent of whose costs are still funded from extrabudgetary resources, may curtail its effectiveness. As we have said before, reforms cannot succeed in the absence of required resources. We are seriously concerned that the levels of funding for humanitarian assistance have been declining over the last few years, both in absolute terms and as a proportion of programme requirements.

It is clear from the report of the Secretary-General that less than 25 per cent of the requirements of humanitarian assistance were actually made available by mid-July 1998. We therefore strongly support his earlier proposal to conduct a comprehensive review of the funding of humanitarian programmes, including, *inter alia*, the relationship between funding provided for emergencies and resources made available for development programming. We hope that consolidated reports by the Humanitarian Affairs Coordinator on the implications of under-funding, including forced changes in priorities and cancellation of activities, would be an important first step in ensuring that the United Nations can provide adequate assistance to those in need.

We have noted the dilemmas of relief and development linkage outlined in the report. We believe that a comprehensive approach that links relief and development is required to close the relief-to-development gap. The eradication of poverty through sustained socio-economic development offers the best opportunity to break through the vicious circle of underdevelopment, conflict and misery.

There can be no doubt, during this fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that the promotion and protection of these rights constitute one of the core responsibilities of the United Nations in its functions, both in the preservation of international peace and security and in the promotion of development. The emphasis and priority which the Secretary-General places on human rights in the work of the Organization is therefore welcome. However, the report tends to simplify the relationship between human rights and peace and security, as well as development; we would be concerned if the United Nations were to seek solutions and responses that rely excessively on a strengthening only of the legal order in the promotion of human rights.

There can be no doubt that there are situations in which human rights are a major cause of conflict. There can also be no doubt that a body of legal norms, rules and laws is important for the protection of human rights. However, human rights seen only from this perspective become essentially problems of behaviour and discipline, to be rectified by the enforcement of laws, norms and standards. Such an approach, however, ignores or downplays the historical, sociological, ideological and economic circumstances which govern or influence the behaviour.

All fundamental human rights are universal. But the roots of human rights violations may vary and may not always be amenable to legislative and enforcement approaches. For example, situations in which threats to human rights come from outside or beyond the Government, through extreme ideologies — we are aware of the worst instances of this — require a much more multifaceted approach. Similarly, human rights problems that are in reality symptoms of underdevelopment cannot be approached simply from a legal or behaviourist angle. They must be addressed as problems of development.

The United Nations must view all human rights — civil, political, economic, social and cultural — as universal, indivisible, interdependent, interrelated and embedded in the trinity of democracy, development and human rights. The Organization must not, either wittingly or unknowingly, try to promote a partial concept of human rights seen as, or modelled essentially on, civil and political rights and divorced from democracy and development. This could lead to a dichotomy between human rights and development that would be most undesirable. It could raise concerns that the mainstreaming of human rights, especially in the sphere of the United Nations development activities, could displace development from its central role in the work of the United Nations. A comprehensive approach that mainstreams economic, social and cultural rights to development, not only in name but also in deed, is the approach that would be most consistent with the holistic concept of human rights that the United Nations should aim to promote.

The United Nations has a wide charter of responsibilities as it approaches the next millennium. The Secretary-General has proposed initiatives for us to consider, and we look forward to constructive discussion on them. However, as long as the United Nations is hamstrung by its ongoing financial crisis, its scope for action will be severely curtailed.

We trust, therefore, that all Member States will demonstrate their support for the United Nations, which all of us need now more than ever in a globalizing world, and ensure that it is placed on a sound financial footing. A United Nations that is bankrupt or kept in chronic poverty reflects a political bankruptcy and a lack of will to back the institution on which our hopes must rest for our collective future. That is, hopefully, not a message that the Organization wishes to send.

We commit ourselves to supporting the Secretary-General in his continuing efforts to reform the United Nations and make it more responsive to the needs of its Members. We wish him well in his endeavours and assure him of our constructive engagement.

Mr. Burleigh (United States of America): Over the past several years a quiet revolution, as Secretary-General Annan has noted, has been taking place here at the United Nations. The Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization, which is before us this morning, further illustrates the many ways in which the new culture of reform is taking root throughout the United Nations.

The Secretary-General's strong and impressive leadership for reform is building confidence, both within the Secretariat and among Member States. A strong, institution-wide consensus has emerged for reform. Progress is being made in priority-setting, budget discipline and rationalization of structures and functions in accordance with Assembly mandates. Of course, the proof of the package's success will be in its effective implementation.

Secretary-General Annan took an important first step in the reform effort with the appointment of Louise Frechette as Deputy Secretary-General. This new post ensures that attention to reform and the ongoing strategic management of Member States' interests will continue. Cabinet-style management is also improving United Nations operations.

In order to ensure continued progress, the United Nations will need to focus on the Organization's comparative advantages. The more complex the global environment, the more we need to prioritize and manage what the United Nations can best do with what it has in hand. The United States delegation shares the Secretary-General's view that administration and management must continue to focus on creating a mission-driven and results-oriented Organization.

However, while the Secretary-General's reform package is bearing fruit, there is still significant work remaining. We advocate robust implementation of the points highlighted in the Secretary-General's report. This would include time limits on new programmes and results-based budgeting. These have been authorized by the Assembly since 1987 in its programme planning, budget, monitoring and evaluation rules. Their implementation is long overdue, as is the functioning of the recently agreed dividend-for-development account.

A striking theme in the recently concluded general debate was that of globalization, and indeed we strongly support the efforts of the Secretary-General to adapt this Organization to a globalized society. The strengthening of cooperation and working relations within the United Nations system — between the Organization and the international financial institutions at both Secretariat and intergovernmental levels — is an excellent example. We look forward to further initiatives in this area.

Likewise, the progressive adaptation of United Nations development machinery, both in organization and in philosophy, demonstrates the realization that if development is to be sustainable, it must encompass not only economic growth but also the distribution of the fruits of that growth, investment in human as well as capital infrastructure, good governance and, of course, respect for human rights. As regards adaptation, we have been impressed that the United Nations has undertaken a much needed renewal of its activities in coordinating humanitarian relief over the course of the year.

As the Assembly now considers its many agenda items, we must keep in mind this need — that is, to continue to continue to adapt United Nations work so as to better meet today's international realities. The Organization's interests in this regard will be well served by the Secretary-General's planned report to the Millennium Assembly. Preparing for this important event by reviewing the Organization's priorities will help ensure that the United Nations remains relevant and vibrant for the twenty-first century.

Critical to this is effective oversight. We are pleased with the progress of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. Management audits, the announcement of guidelines, in-depth evaluations, anti-fraud work, programme performance reporting, support for institutional reform, and follow-up reviews all show that the Organization is going beyond merely learning lessons to actually applying them. Of course, the support and active participation of staff members in the reform initiatives is critical to their success. In order to empower them more effectively we agree with the report that vital reforms in personnel policy must still be undertaken.

Key to the success of this Organization is the United Nations ability to live within its resources and to use them where the United Nations can best offer unique assistance. Additionally, the United Nations many stakeholders around the world need to see the Secretariat implementing reform in ways in which it can best offer unique assistance.

Finally, and perhaps most important, we agree with the Secretary-General when he notes that

> "Member States must engage those reforms that lie within their purview with greater determination and vigour." *(A/53/1, para. 236)*

My Government believes that this simple truth is the irreducible bottom line to the prospect for sustained and effective reform as admirably advocated by the Secretary-General. So, in that context we stand ready, as we have in the past, to assist the Secretary-General in all his efforts on behalf of Assembly mandates to press for greater efficiency, accountability and results-focused accomplishments.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Let me begin by expressing in the name of my delegation our greatest appreciation for the excellent efforts made by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in guiding the work of this Organization most wisely and competently. It is a matter which we indeed have expected since he assumed his post. We in Kuwait wish to reiterate our full support for his efforts to highlight the leading role of the United Nations in the international plane.

My delegation has studied carefully the Secretary-General's report in document A/53/1, which we are considering today. We cannot fail to pay tribute to the manner in which it is couched. It is comprehensive in the way it deals with the issues. It is also characterized by vision in grappling with certain international issues, not to mention courage in stating the shortcomings of the work of the United Nations in certain respects and the reasons for such shortcomings and providing the practical solutions, which is a matter that deserves the appreciation of the Members of the United Nations.

My delegation fully supports the position of the Secretary-General to continue with the reform of the United Nations. Kuwait has always expressed its support of the efforts of the Secretary-General in this respect. It responded to certain measures and suggestions on his part quickly and voluntarily. We agree with him that reform should be a continuous process and not merely a transient action. So we have to support the Secretary-General and ask him to continue his meritorious efforts in the field of reform, especially as regards strengthening the role of the United Nations in the social, economic and development areas. These issues are contained in the report we are considering today.

Furthermore, since Kuwait belongs to the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, it wishes to state its support for all the worthy observations provided by these two groups jointly, especially on the process of reform and in particular the section regarding solving the financial crisis.

The report of the Secretary-General has intensively focused on the efforts of the United Nations to resolve international conflicts, especially those that are rife on the African continent — and in Afghanistan — that have been dealt with objectively and frankly. He has paid tribute to the success of the efforts in defusing the crisis that emerged last February because of the problem between the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and Iraq. He stressed that his role comes within preventive diplomacy, and in this respect we fully agree with him.

However, Kuwait wishes to continue this substantive part and wishes to refer to the efforts of the United Nations and the Secretary-General on the other issues between Kuwait and Iraq — that is, the two issues of the prisoners of war and the return of Kuwaiti properties and possessions that were stolen during the period of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. We believe that there are certain legal and technical reasons that impel us to clarify what has taken place concerning these two issues. For example, the prisoners of war and return of property to Kuwait fall under certain major issues considered at the United Nations — that is, the General Assembly item about the consequences of the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait in 1990, and the Security Council item entitled "The situation between Iraq and Kuwait".

The United Nations is concerned with the follow-up of the above issues, especially that it now has a representative in Iraq who is following up these and other issues. Furthermore, the previous reports of the Secretary-General had referred to the developments of the above two issues.

We in Kuwait call upon the Secretary-General to pay special attention to the two above-mentioned issues, especially regarding the Kuwaiti prisoners of war. This involves tragedy and suffering on the part of thousands of Kuwaitis who are awaiting the return of their innocent relatives. We confirm here that this is one kind of human suffering. According to our understanding, human suffering is one and the same whether it is the suffering of one individual or hundreds of individuals, or whether it was a result of sanctions or a hostage/prisoner-of-war situation and deprivation. It is one and the same suffering that should be dealt with strictly in a human manner and in a way that confirms the credibility of the United Nations in this respect.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate our appreciation of the Secretary-General for all his efforts. I wish him success in his efforts aimed at the creation of a new Organization — an Organization capable of confronting the challenges of the next century and of playing a leading and effective role in the international community. This is our heartfelt wish and aspiration, as it is also for the peoples of the world.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization. It is refreshingly concise yet comprehensive in its coverage. It deserves our serious and in-depth discussion and consideration. Our deliberations in this particular debate, under item 10 of the agenda of the General Assembly, will provide the basis for further consideration of specific issues later on. These deliberations should also assist the Secretary-General and his associates and staff in preparing for further work to be done during the current session as well as future sessions of the General Assembly.

We now stand at the threshold of a new millennium. Our consolidated efforts at the United Nations must be directed towards ushering in an era of unprecedented international cooperation and equitable development. Through our continued commitment to the Organization, we should be able to work collectively to establish a global concord that is true to the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

My delegation supports the Secretary-General's plan to submit a report to the Millennium Assembly, in which he proposed to suggest

> "workable objectives and institutional means for the United Nations to meet the challenges of human solidarity in the years ahead". (*A/53/1, para. 3*)

While applauding the Secretary-General's initiative to draw upon diverse views from various levels of society, my delegation wishes to emphasize that preparations for the Millennium Assembly should primarily be an intergovernmental process. It is important that the Secretary-General work closely with Member States through an appropriate mechanism in preparing for the important Assembly. Similarly, Member States should begin to prepare to ensure that the Millennium Assembly

will achieve concrete results rather than be a largely celebratory occasion.

I wish to reiterate my delegation's commitment to the importance of upholding Article 1 of the United Nations Charter, which calls for effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to international peace and security. Too often in the past, inaction and selective actions on the part of the Organization have led to the escalation of conflicts, resulting in unnecessary human and material costs. Too often, badly needed resources have to be spent on post-conflict activities. It is important that preventive efforts be stepped up so that the Organization's priorities can be appropriately ordered. My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's efforts in this regard.

We commend the Secretary-General for his use of the services of prominent and skilled diplomats to serve as his personal representatives. We also support fully the Secretary-General's call for better information-gathering and the improvement of early warning systems to monitor and respond to potential conflicts in order to enable swift and timely action on the part of Member States as well as of the Organization. Strategies have to be well coordinated. Above all, Member States must have the political will and resources to implement such strategies.

We concur with the Secretary-General's assertion that a new holistic concept of security is necessary in further efforts at preventing conflicts. Peace and security are indeed inextricably linked to the promotion of development. The Secretary-General has presented a very important question — basically, that of broadening the role of the Security Council by invoking Article 65 of the Charter. While recognizing the increasing need of the Council to be provided with accurate and relevant information to address economic, social and humanitarian crises that threaten international peace and security, my delegation would like to stress that any action by the Security Council in this regard must be taken with due recognition of the proper role and function of General Assembly. My delegation believes that Member States should examine thoroughly the Secretary-General's comments with a view to studying the various implications.

My delegation is supportive of efforts to further intensify cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in early warning and preventive diplomacy. We recognize that the United Nations cannot act alone on every potential conflict. However, it is important to ensure that this Organization does not absolve itself totally of its central and critical role in the maintenance of international peace and security. My delegation strongly believes that preventive diplomacy should be undertaken within the provisions of the United Nations Charter and its expressed mandate. The question of reconciling the legitimate concerns of the international community and respect for the principle of sovereignty, as expressed by many Member States on previous occasions, should also be carefully addressed.

On the issue of peacekeeping, Malaysia wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the important role of the United Nations in peacekeeping efforts. Malaysia is fully supportive of the Organization's initiative to continue to strengthen the United Nations capacity to respond swiftly to conflict situations. Malaysia was among the first of 77 Member States to join the United Nations standby arrangements system. My delegation takes note of the initiative taken by some Member States to establish the Stand-by Forces High-Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG). However, we believe that, since membership of this Brigade is not open to all States Members of the United Nations, it is perhaps not quite appropriate at this stage to refer to it as the United Nations Stand-by Forces High-Readiness Brigade. Indeed, there is a need to clarify how the United Nations intends to deploy this Brigade in the context of the existing United Nations standby arrangements that involve other United Nations Member States.

The subject of sanctions has continued to be of great concern to Member States. My delegation strongly feels that sanctions should be applied with great caution. They should be resorted to only in cases of extreme necessity when other peaceful options provided for in the Charter have been proven inadequate. Sanctions cannot be used as an instrument for promoting the narrow and national interests of individual Member States. Sanctions, when deemed absolutely necessary, should have specific objectives, be clearly targeted and given specified time-frames so as to reduce humanitarian costs.

My delegation notes that some significant progress has been made in the reform process instituted by the Secretary-General. We welcome the continuing efforts aimed at the streamlining of the Secretariat, the reorganization of the work programme into four core areas and other measures aimed at improving the whole United Nations system. We welcome the establishment of the Senior Management Group. Clearly, the implementation of the important measures proposed by the Secretary-General that require the approval of Member States will have to be monitored so as to ensure

a more efficient and effective United Nations, with a renewed emphasis on economic, social and development activities.

My delegation is pleased to note the early preparation for a review conference in the year 2000 to assess the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and for a special session of the General Assembly in June 1999 to follow up on the International Conference on Population and Development. Malaysia will work closely with other Member States and the relevant United Nations organs and bodies to ensure that we all remain committed to the promotion of social development worldwide, particularly in the light of the current economic crisis, which is spreading fast around the world, threatening to further drive millions of the poor and underprivileged towards more extreme levels of poverty and deprivation.

The humanitarian efforts of the United Nations around the world deserve our applause and support. My delegation welcomes the creation of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. We also welcome the Organization's initiatives to provide early, efficient and more coordinated response to humanitarian situations and its efforts to improve the delivery of humanitarian services. The question of the security and safety of humanitarian workers in conflict situations is of utmost importance and should be adequately addressed. We note the slight decrease in the number of refugees worldwide in 1997. Nevertheless, we think that serious efforts should be made not only to resolve current refugee problems, but also to prevent future ones.

This year, we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We will also conduct the first review of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. We have to take stock of the progress made so far in the field of human rights. There is still evidence of double standards and selectivity being applied in the treatment of human rights. My delegation takes note of the Secretary-General's assessment on human rights and concurs with him that

> "the promotion of human rights must not be treated as something separate from the Organization's other activities". (*ibid., para. 172*)

However, we would like to emphasize that all rights should be treated equally and in a balanced manner. Unfortunately, the implementation of the right to development remains very unsatisfactory. Therefore, a new spirit of cooperation needs to be injected to reinvigorate our collective commitment to all aspects of human rights.

My delegation shares the vision of the Secretary-General that the United Nations should continue to give priority to disarmament issues. Malaysia is particularly pleased with the reestablishment of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. The Secretary-General has appropriately warned of the danger of nuclear-weapons proliferation and the catastrophic consequences of the use of such weapons. Clearly, international efforts on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation have suffered some serious setbacks recently. Malaysia welcomes the recent announcement made by Pakistan and India that they will sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in the near future.

As regards the work of the Conference on Disarmament, my delegation regrets that the Conference has failed yet again to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. My delegation, however, welcomes the establishment of the two committees in the Conference on Disarmament to deal with fissile material cut-off and negative security assurances. We hope that they will make speedy progress in their deliberations.

Serious efforts should be made to strengthen the Protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention. The international community should be prepared to conclude negotiations as soon as possible on a balanced protocol for the Convention's verification regime, taking into account the interests of developing countries, particularly related to technology transfer.

The proliferation of small arms is one of the most challenging issues confronting the international community. The illicit trafficking in and widespread use of small arms have the effect of destabilizing societies. My delegation supports the suggested holding of an international conference to increase public awareness on the need to deal with the situation.

The challenge of development remains paramount. Yet the volume of external aid to developing countries has steadily declined throughout this decade. This dilemma that we face as a community of nations is accurately summed up by the Secretary-General when he says

> "Our agenda is expanding, yet our resources are declining." *(A/53/1, para. 121)*

The total development assistance made available by the United Nations is a relatively modest $5.5 billion per year. Nevertheless, we share the Secretary-General's hope regarding the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. My delegation hopes that further efforts will be made to constantly refine the system.

The Secretary-General has spoken in his report about engaging with globalization. In the current context, it is important for all of us to be alert to the numerous challenges and vast opportunities offered by globalization. There are new dimensions of globalization which have to be fully understood. These new dimensions can only be addressed multilaterally by the United Nations and the other international institutions. The task ahead is not to reverse globalization, but to understand it better so that we can respond more efficiently and effectively. We are now in the midst of increasingly intense discussions as to how Governments should respond to the contagion of economic recession arising from chaos in the international financial system. The United Nations should not be left out of these discussions. My delegation appreciates that the Secretary-General is very sensitive to these developments. We will work with him and other Member States to ensure that the Organization can play a positive and meaningful role.

My delegation shares the view of the Secretary-General that international cooperation has a vital role to play in arresting and reversing the potentially harmful effects of human activities on the environment. Malaysia believes that dialogue with the private sector should be increased further in the joint endeavour to preserve and protect the environment. We are pleased with the industry dialogue with the private sector, started at the Commission on Sustainable Development's sixth session and now becoming a regular feature of the Commission.

I cannot conclude this statement without again making reference to the precarious financial health of the Organization, as I did at the last session. Obviously, there will be no transformation of the United Nations without the necessary financial or budgetary support of the Organization to carry out its multifaceted programmes and activities. My delegation views with deep concern the Secretary-General's reference to the further deteriorating financial situation of the United Nations. There is no running away from the fundamental issue. The major contributors have to pay their overdue contributions as soon as possible and without conditions. This and other related issues must be resolved as soon as possible if the "quiet revolution", as advocated by the Secretary-General, is to succeed.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to propose that the list of speakers for the debate on this item be closed at noon today.

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate on this item to inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): Like previous speakers, I wish to start by expressing our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his personal presentation of the report on the work of the Organization before the opening of the general debate. We hope that this innovation, which we consider to be an integral element of the reform process, will be maintained and become a tradition.

Mr. Ortega Urbina (Nicaragua), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In our view, the Secretary-General's report contains concise and thoughtful coverage of United Nations activities over the past year. It focuses our attention on a number of crucial questions with a direct relationship to the issue of the relevance of this world body to the requirements of the gradually emerging new era in international relations.

Addressing the continuing process of drastic and often unpredictable changes in today's complicated world, the report highlights the major characteristic of the human condition at the current stage of modern history. It is widely recognized that most of the changes going on are caused by the phenomenon of globalization. In this respect, the Secretary-General has accurately formulated the major, threefold challenge facing the international community at the turn of the new century and new millennium, which is

> "to understand better the emerging socio-economic forces and forms of globalization, to shape them to serve our needs and to respond effectively to their deleterious consequences". *(A/53/1, para. 15)*

My delegation cannot help reiterating the need for global responses to global challenges repeatedly stressed by the Secretary-General himself. It is the global institutions that are most suited to, and are expected to, provide these responses, and in the final analysis nobody

else except us can forge them. This very clear philosophy, shared by many other actors of contemporary international relations, has inspired my country, Ukraine, to take the position of an active and staunch supporter of a stronger, more efficient and more effective United Nations.

In this respect, we note with satisfaction that the report of the Secretary-General registers the first positive results of the "quiet revolution" of institutional reforms in this universal Organization that was initiated last year.

We feel especially proud that Ukraine's representative, who was honoured to preside over the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, made, as many delegations have concluded, a valuable contribution to promoting this very important process.

I would like to take this opportunity to assure the President that our delegation will offer him every support in his efforts to facilitate progress during the consideration of the remaining proposals which the Secretary-General outlined in his report (A/51/950), "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform".

From the experience of Ukraine's presidency of the General Assembly, we acquired firsthand knowledge of how difficult is the task of ensuring progress in reforming an institution where the interests of 185 sovereign States are to be reduced to a common denominator. However, we strongly advocate the need to move ahead along the road of change, since there is a predominant interest in this endeavour, which is to enhance the capacity of the United Nations to respond effectively to the requirements of a changing world.

In this respect, we look forward to the Secretary-General's report to the Millennium Assembly, wherein he intends to outline a new set of objectives and institutional means for the Organization as it moves into the new era.

The thematic overview of the work of the Organization, contained in the main part of the Secretary-General's report, embraces all the key areas in which the United Nations is mandated to conduct its activities. However, since there is always room for perfection, my delegation would like to make a number of remarks with regard to both the format and the contents of the report.

First, I would like to recall resolution 51/241 of 31 July 1997, containing a number of concrete provisions designed to influence future versions of the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization. While some have been taken into account in the present report, we have to note that a number of other important measures have yet to be implemented.

Specifically, in accordance with that resolution, the report was supposed to contain a forward-looking section which "shall describe the specific goals for the Secretariat in the year ahead in the context of the work plan for the Organization in the coming year, taking into account the medium-term plan and the fact that the responsibility for establishing priorities rests with the Member States". Furthermore, it should have included "an analytical and concise annex elaborating the costs by major programmes and activities of all bodies of the United Nations system, located both in and outside New York, according to their mandates, so as to improve Member States' overview of system-wide issues". *(resolution 51/241, annex, paras. 6 and 9)*

The usefulness of these addenda is self-evident, and we expect them to be included in reports on the work of the Organization.

Our next observation deals with the contents of the first three parts of the report, covering United Nations activities in maintaining international peace and security, in the area of international cooperation for development and in the humanitarian field. We understand that it is very difficult to retain the short and concise format of the report, which we support very much, and at the same time to satisfy the requirement of presenting a complete record of the myriad activities the United Nations has undertaken.

However, it is regrettable that some of the important areas of the Organization's work were left outside the present report. For example, we find no reference to the programme activities related to solving the specific problems faced by the countries with economies in transition. Furthermore, the report does not cover the efforts of the United Nations in the field of overcoming the consequences of major technological disasters, including the Chernobyl catastrophe, the global dimensions and implications of which have been repeatedly recognized by the General Assembly.

I assume that other delegations may have their own examples of other omissions. It is our hope that the Secretariat will take note of our remarks and will take the necessary measures to avoid such omissions in the future.

By these remarks I do not wish to leave the impression that our delegation underestimates the excellent work done by the experts in the United Nations Secretariat who helped the Secretary-General to prepare his report for this session. We were motivated only by the conviction that constructive criticism would be in a reliable companion, promoting the spirit of reform reigning in the United Nations corridors.

I would like to conclude by again stressing our continued support for the Secretary-General's leadership in our common endeavour aimed at strengthening and revitalizing this world Organization, and to reiterate the resolve of Ukraine to contribute actively to these efforts.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): In his presentation of this year's report on the work of the Organization, Secretary-General Kofi Annan highlighted the need for the United Nations to rediscover the connection between peace and economic security by pointing out that if the poor lack development even the richest on this planet will not be safe. We agree entirely. Unfortunately, an international consensus capable of marshalling the required political and economic resources into a coherent programme for economic development and improved governance at the global level has yet to emerge.

At the same time, there are a certain encouraging signs that deserve to be acknowledged. The recently concluded general debate revealed a common aspiration to seek international solutions to our international problems.

The socio-economic forces unleashed by the still undisciplined phenomenon known as globalization have presented the international community with a new set of challenges. In order to spread its more beneficial effects to the greatest number, while minimizing its destructive byproducts, it will be necessary to take full advantage of the possibilities for joint analysis and cooperative action offered by the United Nations system. As the Secretary-General rightly reminds us, no other organization enjoys the scope and legitimacy of the United Nations. It is thus appropriate — and indeed desirable — that the United Nations should take up its responsibilities in this domain by exercising leadership in the context of current international efforts to prevent globalization from disrupting the stability of those who have worked hard to earn it, while ensuring that it leads to greater progress, prosperity and security for all.

Brazil is reassured by the determination demonstrated by the Secretary-General to address the various dimensions of globalization as he prepares the United Nations for a new era. By contrasting the stark economic realities in which the majority of humanity is forced to struggle with the fact that the past half-century has witnessed one of the longest periods of economic expansion in history, the Secretary-General's report carries a strong warning to all those who can still contemplate the growing gap between the wealthiest and the neediest without perceiving its potential for destabilization on a wide and worrisome scale.

We believe that the Secretary-General deserves credit for the series of concrete steps that he has been taking in order to modernize the United Nations. The institutional reforms he initiated have undoubtedly contributed to revitalizing the organizational machinery and improving accountability. It is now incumbent upon Member States to complete a process that should not be allowed to drag on into the new millennium. The very last paragraph of the Secretary-General's report carries an unambiguous — though carefully worded — message to this effect. It states

> "Reforming the United Nations institutional machinery is but a first step towards refashioning its roles for the new era." *(A/53/1, para. 236)*

The report concludes that the Millennium Assembly, which is to meet in less than two years, should concentrate on substantive issues.

It follows that Member States should not shun their obligation to deal with the necessary revision of those aspects of the Organization's reform that only we have the power to enact. As Minister Lampreia reminded the Assembly on 21 September:

> "For Brazil, reforming the United Nations necessarily implies updating the functioning and composition of the Security Council, which still mirrors a period of history that is now long gone" *(A/53/PV.7, p. 9)*.

There can be no justification for indefinitely prolonging discussions on this topic after five years of intensive, in-depth consideration of all its aspects. As the only universally recognized instrument of collective security, the Council is of particular importance to those among the overwhelming majority of United Nations Members that, like Brazil, are not parties to any military alliance. As we evolve towards a more markedly multipolar world, the Council's authority can, in principle, be exercised

more fully in conformity with the original design of the Charter, given the necessary political will. A strong and representative Security Council will likewise help to prevent the international order from degenerating again into more unstable balance of power schemes, with increasing rivalry for spheres of influence.

Furthermore, just as it becomes apparent that the seven major industrialized Powers will not find satisfactory answers to the financial problems of a globalized world economy without taking into consideration the points of view of the developing world, it is also clear that the present imbalances in the Security Council's composition, particularly in the permanent member category, constitute a handicap to effective United Nations responses to an international security agenda that deals predominantly with crises outside the developed world.

While remaining within the Secretary-General's unifying perspective of the relationship between peace and economic security, my delegation is pleased to note that a view long held by Brazil has been endorsed in paragraph 30 of the report, which highlights the need for a more dynamic interaction between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. We wholeheartedly support the call for giving a new operational meaning to Article 65 of the Charter — described in that paragraph of the Secretary-General's report as a "dormant provision" — in order to better equip the United Nations to address the economic, social and humanitarian crises that threaten global security.

Many of the problems the Security Council has been grappling with, from dealing with mass flows of refugees to making sure war-torn societies do not again lapse into conflict, require an integrated approach that will satisfactorily harmonize a number of economic and social variables with security concerns. If peace, as the Secretary-General recalls, cannot be defined as mere absence of war but is also a function of social and economic well-being, it is only natural that a more coordinated approach to promote peace should be sought, with improved relations between the corresponding United Nations organs. We believe that the establishment of a humanitarian segment in the Economic and Social Council and the existence of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs are good steps in that regard.

We must also express our satisfaction at the emphasis placed by the Secretary-General on the concept of diplomacy as a tool for replacing mistrust with confidence and reducing international threats to peace. The Secretary-General is correct in arguing that the role of diplomacy is sometimes overlooked. As the representative of a country that prides itself on its long diplomatic tradition, I can only welcome the fact that diplomacy with a capital "D" has acquired a committed advocate in Mr. Kofi Annan. His missions to Iraq and Nigeria, and his role in working towards a negotiated settlement of the Timorese question, stand among his most notable accomplishments in the past year — the accomplishments of a high-ranking international diplomat with an agenda exclusively dedicated to the advancement of peace.

One of the preceding speakers referred to the question of sanctions. The question of Security Council-imposed sanctions continues to be a matter of great concern, and we regret that the Security Council has not yet been able to respond to General Assembly resolution 51/242. Together with other members of the Council, we will continue to work towards a much-needed reassessment of this instrument, with a twofold preoccupation: first, to enhance the effectiveness of sanctions and secondly, to ensure that humanitarian and other non-intended effects of sanctions are minimized or eliminated.

Brazil has built up and lived by a culture of peace, as pointed out by the Secretary-General himself in his trip to Brasilia last July. We continue to believe that coercion can be contemplated only as a last resort, in extreme circumstances, and that, for United Nations Members, the use of force can be contemplated only in clear cases of self-defence or when collectively authorized by the Security Council. In today's world, a culture of peace requires respect for international law and a commitment to diplomacy and multilateralism even in the face of incomprehension by the mass media or at the risk of alienating certain segments of public opinion. The report on the work of the Organization provides us with the necessary reassurance that under the able leadership of Secretary-General, the United Nations remains not only our best hope for a worldwide culture of peace — one capable of reconciling peace with economic security — but also, as he eloquently puts it, a unique expression of our common humanity and an indispensable instrument for achieving common goals.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): We welcome the opportunity which this debate gives us to look back at some of the principal issues that were addressed over the past year and to measure how successfully we, the Member States, as well as the Organization as a whole, have tackled them.

In the first place, I want to extend our gratitude to the Secretary-General for the clarity and detail of his report and for having introduced it personally to the Assembly at the beginning of the session. He encouraged us to read it from cover to cover, which indeed we have done, for it reads easily and provides us with a succinct but perceptive analysis of some of the key issues which affect our work.

What I believe emerges clearly from the pages of the report is a description of a revitalized and increasingly energetic and relevant Organization which has a central role to play in the way that the international community of nations deals with a myriad of often interlinking issues. The enormous challenges which they pose to us as Member States and to the United Nations as an Organization are addressed clearly by the Secretary-General. It is our shared responsibility, through our activities at all levels in this house, to contribute to finding solutions to those global problems and at the same time to take action that will strengthen the effectiveness of the response of the Organization.

The Secretary-General describes as a "quiet revolution" the institutional reforms that he initiated last year. They have indeed brought about a greater unity of purpose and coherence of effort. We warmly congratulate him, the Deputy Secretary-General and the members of the Secretariat for the success they have brought to this important endeavour. Change in any large organization is never easy to accomplish, and in one as complex as this it can be especially hard. We recognize that patience must be exercised on the road forward, and we hope that when he reports to us next year, the benefits which will flow from a streamlined and more cohesive Secretariat will be visible to all.

The establishment of the Department for Disarmament Affairs has been a particularly welcome development, and under the direction of its highly distinguished Under-Secretary-General it has already undertaken some important work. The designation of this Department as a focal point for all United Nations action on small arms, together with the proposal for multisectoral and coordinated action on small arms, is both timely and welcome.

If the last session of the General Assembly can be described as the "Assembly of reform", the present session should not be remembered as the "Assembly of no reform". While we can be justifiably satisfied with what was achieved last year, we should not rest on our laurels.

The Secretary-General rightly reminds us in his report that a number of reform proposals remain to be approved. Among these are some to which my delegation attaches considerable importance, and we hope that with some further work it will be possible to reach consensus on them. The Development Account, for example, is a valuable concept which must be made to work. The Secretary-General has provided some useful clarifications which we hope will allow this issue to develop in a positive fashion for the benefit of developing countries.

The role which the United Nations can play in working for greater peace and security in today's world is addressed fully by the Secretary-General in his report. In his statement in the general debate, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland spoke of the need to address the root causes of conflict. The holistic concept of security which the United Nations is embracing serves to reinforce the correctness of this approach.

Extreme poverty and underdevelopment are given their proper place in the report's overview. They are the enemies of peace, and all too often they are the allies of instability, disorder and conflict. We must recognize these facts, just as we acknowledge that there can be no real security without development. Too many of today's conflicts stem from poverty caused by chronic underdevelopment, human rights abuse and political instability. The importance of good governance, respect for human rights and democratization are rightly emphasized by the Secretary-General, and these are all areas in which the United Nations can and should make a lasting contribution.

The report addresses the broad theme of globalization and offers some lucid insights into how the international community and the United Nations can engage it. The financial uncertainty in important regional financial markets around the world has, as the Secretary-General points out, exacted steep and possibly long-lasting social costs. It is still too early to say how these can be arrested and what steps can be taken to make globalization work for the betterment of mankind.

The adoption in July of the Statute of the International Criminal Court was a historic development. We share the Secretary-General's fervent hope that a large majority of Member States will have signed and ratified it by the end of the year 2000. I am pleased to say that Ireland will sign the Statute in two days' time in Rome.

The President returned to the Chair.

A central message of the report is the continuing importance of multilateral diplomacy in a world of rapid and often baffling change. It provides each of us, small and large, with a platform to explain and better understand. And it remains the best hope for the many still unheard voices to gain an audience. The year since the Secretary-General last reported on the work of the Organization has witnessed a number of challenges which only a multilateral body such as ours could have the authority to meet.

As we move towards the new millennium, the challenges we face will not, alas, grow less in number. However, we can take some comfort from the fact that we are beginning to make this Organization more responsive to the challenges and more effective and efficient in the way in which it handles them.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would like at the outset to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the preparation and introduction of the report contained in document A/53/1.

From its very first lines, the report of the Secretary-General identifies the difficulties, the uncertainties and even the anxieties over the role that is performed by multilateral organizations in a rapidly and constantly changing international context.

We agree that the Millennium Assembly to be held in the year 2000 affords an exceptional opportunity for leaders from all parts of the world to consider the type of Organization that the new century demands. The Millennium Assembly should be carefully prepared through the intergovernmental process. That Assembly will make it possible to study thoroughly, among other issues, how the commitments undertaken in the United Nations conferences held in recent years are being carried out.

We have had only a short time to evaluate the results of the reforms sponsored by the Secretary-General and adopted by the General Assembly in its capacity as the foremost body of the United Nations. Nevertheless, we are fully confident that reforms will soon begin to surface in all areas of activity of the Organization.

The General Assembly will be considering the proposals made by the Secretary-General during this session, and my delegation is committed to participating in these deliberations in a constructive spirit. We will uphold the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter, the mandates given by the General Assembly and the need to provide the Organization with ways and means to better face the challenges of both the present and the future.

The initiative for the United Nations to enter into a mutually beneficial dialogue with the international business community is indeed very interesting. The idea deserves to be considered in depth by the General Assembly within the framework of the rules and procedures of the Organization.

We understand and share the concern of the Secretary-General on the need for the Organization to strengthen its initiative in the field of conflict prevention. This point is obvious, since Article 1 of the Charter states as a purpose of the United Nations the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and the suppression of acts of aggression.

In addition, the Charter clearly sets forth the functions and powers of each of the principal organs of the Organization. In accordance with Articles 10 and 11 of the Charter, the General Assembly may discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the Charter and may make recommendations on such questions or matters. It may also consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, and it may discuss any matter in regard to these questions.

In accordance with Article 14, the General Assembly may recommend measures for the peaceful settlement of any situation, regardless of origin, which it deems likely to impair the general welfare or friendly relations among nations, including situations resulting from a violation of the provisions of the Charter setting forth the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

For its part, in accordance with Article 24, the Security Council, specifically and exclusively, has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

It is necessary to improve the working relationship among the principal organs of the Organization, keeping, however, the allocation of functions and powers as contained in the Charter and bearing in mind the fundamental role it grants the General Assembly as the supreme body of the Organization.

We agree with the report's assessment that resolutions imposing binding sanctions should consider exemptions for humanitarian reasons and the effects on third States. Also pertinent are the calls made in this

regard by certain bodies entrusted with supervising human rights treaties with respect to the need for sanctions regimes to provide for concrete measures in order to protect the human rights of the most vulnerable groups.

The diagnosis of the world's economic and social situation and the data contained in the report are indeed dramatic, and they highlight the same realities that are clearly underlined by the recently published *Human Development Report*.

The fact that one fifth of mankind is forced to survive on only a dollar a day, that one third of all Africans are not expected to survive past the age of 40, that 40 per cent of women in developing countries are illiterate and that 50 per cent of South Asian children are underweight at the age of five contrasts dramatically with the economic expansion that has taken place during the second half of this century. It also contrasts with the fact that the volume of external aid to the developing countries has declined steadily throughout recent decades.

Here we see one of the greatest challenges to the international community in general, and to the United Nations in particular. Though it is true that the reforms of the Organization already implemented are positive and point in the right direction, the magnitude of the challenge requires that the Organization do much more than reform and streamline its functioning. It requires, in addition, the firm commitment and political will of the industrialized countries.

The United Nations is a capable tool for the States and the peoples of the world to take advantage of opportunities and to face the challenges posed by globalization. We agree with the Secretary-General's opinion that the economic, social and environmental dimensions of globalization, and, even more so, the so-called transnationalization of "uncivil" elements, require multilateral action by the United Nations and by other international institutions. Accordingly, we believe that public action should be supported, especially as regards globalization.

Finally, I wish to draw attention to the dramatic contrast existing between, on the one hand, the complexity of the challenges and the high expectations of world public opinion regarding the role that the Organization could play to face these challenges, and, on the other, the financial situation of the United Nations. The report of the Secretary-General informs us that the deficit in the regular budget and the unpaid assessments of some countries have been compounded by the fact that countries used to pay on time have stopped doing so.

If the critical financial situation is not overcome, it will be very difficult indeed for the Organization to carry out the work expected of it much less to set serious and ambitious targets for the next century.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Bangladesh is happy that this year the Secretary-General was given the opportunity, as he was last year for the first time in United Nations history, to introduce his report on the work of the Organization at the beginning of the general debate. This is a very welcome arrangement, and should continue to be followed. The membership should be made aware of this beforehand; we believe this procedure will make the general debate more focused and issues-driven, centring on those issues identified in the Secretary-General's report. Bangladesh also believes that in addition to recounting the activities of the previous year, the Secretary-General needs to identify in his report issues that have the potential to challenge the international community in the coming years and to ask world leaders to address those issues during the general debate. We would ask you, Mr. President, and the Secretary-General to give serious thought to this suggestion. The references in this year's report to the Millennium Assembly and to pending reform issues and the proposal to convene global town meetings are ideas in that direction.

This year's report is very readable and presents in a user-friendly manner various mandated activities of the world body. Focus on substantive issues and issues of institutional reform is appropriately balanced and draws attention to the fact that both aspects require full and thorough consideration by us, the Member States, if we want the United Nations to succeed.

Bangladesh finds it comforting to be advised by the Secretary-General that "the United Nations family today acts with greater unity of purpose and coherence of effort than it did a year ago" (*A/53/1, para. 4*). We are happy to learn that the Secretary-General's quiet revolution of institutional reforms is bearing results and that new teamwork is leading the reform efforts in the Secretariat.

Bangladesh wants to commend the Secretary-General for giving good attention to dialogue with the international business community, drawing a parallel with the close working relationships the United Nations has with non-governmental organizations. We want this area of activity to be given increased attention in future reports, focusing on the involvement of the business

community in furthering the United Nations development agenda.

The assertion by the Secretary-General that "the role of diplomacy is so central to virtually all United Nations activities that its specific contribution is sometimes overlooked" (*para. 31*) is very perceptive and worthy of our full cognizance. The attention given to diplomacy in general, and to preventive diplomacy in particular, in paragraphs 31 to 42 of the report is very well deserved. In the area of disarmament, the Secretary-General has rightly highlighted the need "to curb the flow of small arms circulating in civil society" (*para. 50*) and advocates the holding of a United Nations conference on all aspects of the illicit arms trade in the near future.

The Secretary-General's advocacy of "smart sanctions" which seek to pressure regimes rather than peoples and which would thus reduce humanitarian costs will be supported by a majority of our membership, and we would ask the Secretary-General to sharpen the concept of targeted sanctions in his proposals to the Security Council and the General Assembly. In the area of post-conflict peace-building, the need to link all aspects — political, humanitarian, developmental and human rights — of external support for conflict-ridden countries has been underscored. We hope that in the next report the Secretary-General will present details of the new strategic framework concept for peace-building, as elaborated by the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

To Bangladesh, the development mandate of the United Nations has special significance, and we are satisfied that due attention has been given in the report to cooperating for development. Information on the activities of the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, though sketchy, is noteworthy, as this is first time that such information has been included in the report. In view of the wide-ranging implications of the work of the Development Group, the Secretary-General should devote greater space in his reports to its activities. He should also report on progress on work on development indicators undertaken by the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs.

In the section on poverty eradication, Bangladesh believes that the emerging role of microcredit, including the initiation of the $40 million dollar microstart programme of the United Nations Development Programme, should have found a place in the report. We would also like to see the situation in the least developed countries, including landlocked and small island developing countries, given a merited separate section in future reports, in view of the vulnerability of those countries in the globalization process.

Social development, in particular in recent years, has emerged as a critical area of the United Nations development agenda. A more analytical and well-structured section on this subject would be desirable in future. Elaboration on United Nations activities in the area of reproductive health is sadly absent in the report.

The Secretary-General has done well to draw the attention of the international community to the transnationalization of "uncivil" elements along with the emergence of a global civil society. This is an area which needs our concerted attention and action; it should continue to be addressed in the report as we discuss the situation in an increasingly interconnected world. We would also like the Secretary-General to include in his report activities relating to the right to development, in view of its centrality in the human rights regime.

Bangladesh is pleased that considerable attention has been given in the report to accountability and oversight. This should continue in future. United Nations monitoring of improvements in its operations and reforms requires close attention by Member States and should be reported upon regularly in a transparent manner. We are somewhat concerned about the 80 per cent implementation of mandated activities of the Organization. The Secretary-General considers that to be "largely positive" (*para. 222*). We would expect the implementation rate of all reform initiatives to further increase.

We started by commending the Secretary-General for his well-balanced report, and we also believe that our suggestions and ideas should receive needed consideration in the context of future reports.

Mr. Henze (Germany): I would like first of all to thank the Secretary-General and his associates for their timely report on the work of the Organization. They have presented us with a document that vividly depicts the complex and difficult problems that confronted the Organization over the past 12 months.

United Nations reform — that is the reform of all United Nations bodies — is a complicated and therefore at times slow process. But it is a process that is necessary to enable the Organization to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. The report describes the Secretary-General's institutional reforms, which he has very much to the point called a "quiet revolution". Germany

welcomes these reforms as an important contribution towards revitalizing the United Nations. We believe that all Member States will eventually benefit from a reform of all the Organization's bodies. The measures which the Secretary-General has taken so far have already led to a tangible improvement of communication and procedures within the Secretariat.

Track one and track two reforms will allow the operational structures of United Nations funds and programmes to have a greater impact. We believe that the adoption of a funding strategy that seeks to combine results and resources in a multi-year funding framework is another significant step in the same direction. The United Nations must pursue this path with determination as well as a sense of urgency. There must be no erosion of the United Nations development role. We do not wish to see other players assume this role. We wish to see a vigorous United Nations and we therefore encourage the Secretary-General to continue and to expand his reforms.

We very much agree with the Secretary-General's analysis of globalization and its consequences, as well as with your assessment, Mr. President, of these phenomena, as made in your statement before the Assembly on 9 September. The present crises in the world show that we inescapably live in a global context. The United Nations is *par excellence* the institution that can deal with global questions. It is therefore incumbent upon the United Nations to respond to these challenges. Our common future can only be shaped through common efforts. These must include Governments, but also other entities such as non-governmental organizations and multinational corporations.

At the end of the twentieth century, too many of our world's people still suffer from poverty and unemployment. Germany therefore welcomes the efforts of the United Nations to arouse support for the 20/20 Initiative. The Initiative's proposals for the provision of basic social services like education, health care and shelter will be essential for future social development.

The world is not yet a fair place for all its inhabitants. Not everywhere are people put at the centre of development. It is unfortunately not everywhere that women are no longer exposed to discrimination. Three years after the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen, and the World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, it is time to take stock and design future initiatives. Two special sessions of the General Assembly in the year 2000 will provide opportunities to reconfirm our commitment to implement the results of both conferences. These special sessions will also give us a chance to explore new territory. Globalization must be tamed so that it does not threaten socially and economically vulnerable groups. Globalization must be shaped so as to contribute to social development and economic returns for both men and women. These are issues the special sessions should consider attentively.

The turmoil in the world's financial markets demonstrates drastically how important it is for Governments and the relevant international institutions to take preventive action in time. The impact of the financial crisis which has spread from one region to another has already affected a large number of national economies. It shows that the world economy needs an improved framework. The measures discussed at the spring meeting of the Interim Committee of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are indispensable in order to prevent future crises. But we have to think even further. We have to broach the question of whether and how multilaterally agreed interventions could become necessary and useful. Such interventions would surely be more appropriate than unilateral protective measures.

We need better early-warning devices, more transparency and more efficiency in banking systems, especially, but not only, in the newly emerging economies. Again, this is not a task for Governments alone. We need a global partnership between public and private institutions; a partnership between Governments, international financial organizations and corporations. And, furthermore, as the Secretary-General put it in his report, "a bridge must be constructed between ... the Dow Jones index and the human development index". *(A/53/1, para. 15)*

The adoption of the Statute of the International Criminal Court marked a major step forward towards a world order in which the force of law and not the law of force prevails. Perpetrators of the most heinous crimes will no longer go unpunished. Germany will continue to vigorously support the establishment of the International Court. Let me assure the Assembly that my country is working wholeheartedly for the early entry into force of the Rome Statute. Germany intends to sign the Statute before the fiftieth anniversary of the Genocide Convention in December 1998. We will encourage all countries to sign and ratify the Statute as soon as possible. We will actively cooperate in drafting a resolution to that effect during this session. We look forward to participating actively in next year's work of the Preparatory Commission.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan has declared the twenty-first century a century of prevention. As I have already pointed out in my remarks on the state of the world's financial system, he has done so with good reason. Trouble must be nipped in the bud. This is the task of preventive diplomacy, of human rights observers and of peacekeeping forces. We must prevent large numbers of people from having to flee their countries or leave them in search of employment. To strike at the root of mass migration means eliminating their economic, ecological and social causes. The gap between rich and poor grows wider, and this gap must no longer be allowed to grow. It must be closed. All nations must be given a fair chance in global competition. Hence richer countries must help those that are poorer to make the most of their opportunities for development.

Africa shows what can be achieved when the international community and the countries that experience problems join hands. Today democratic elections are held in more than half of the African countries. In 20 African countries economic growth is between 4 per cent and 6 per cent; in 11 it is even higher. However, old and new conflicts in Africa — particularly the continuing violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the unresolved conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia and the increasing tension in Angola — continue to be a source of serious concern. We commend the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General, his representatives and their teams in bringing about peaceful solutions.

I would like to stress our particular appreciation for those sections of the report that analyse the causes of conflict in Africa and contain proposals for the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. During the recent meeting between the Secretary-General and representatives of donor countries we have pledged our full support for his proposals. We will continue to actively cooperate with the African nations, keeping in mind the intrinsic link between peace and development.

With the new millennium ahead, we must act together to shape our future. A reformed and strengthened United Nations will play a paramount role in the fulfilment of the task that lies ahead.

Ms. Wensley (Australia): Australia welcomes the report of the Secretary-General. We believe that this is an excellent report which identifies the substantial challenges the Organization is facing as we prepare ourselves for the new millennium.

I want to concentrate on two of the challenges only that the Secretary-General has identified: United Nations reform and the impact of globalization.

On the issue of United Nations reform, we applaud the considerable progress made by the Secretariat over the last year under the astute and thoughtful leadership of the Secretary-General. Much has been done, but more, obviously, remains to be done.

Our position in support of ongoing reform is very well known. In the jargon of management consultants, it is a process of continuous improvement. We thought that the Deputy Secretary-General captured the thought very well in a recent comment when she described the reform process that the Secretariat is undergoing as "the pursuit of excellence".

One thing that is very important to us and that we hope to see is the ongoing reform objectives identified and brought together in a clear programme of track three activities.

The Secretary-General's report highlights the Millennium Assembly as an opportunity to look ahead at the kind of Organization that we will need in the twenty-first century. We very much look forward to receiving his report on this issue. We support strongly the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his address during the general debate that if we are to capitalize on this opportunity, we need to identify a practical, achievable programme of action. It would be very much a lost opportunity if all that eventuated was an elaborate consultative process and a costly ceremonial exercise.

One critical reform issue that my Government certainly would like to see resolved before the new millennium is that of reform of the Security Council. Unless we can proceed with this, this Organization will not be able to claim that it has adapted successfully to the world in which we live today. My delegation looks forward to debating those issues and that subject in much more detail under later agenda items.

The second major challenge facing the United Nations which I wish to address is that of globalization. The Secretary-General's report and the prominence of the issue in the general debate clearly underline the significance of this issue for the United Nations. Renewed international cooperation is needed to examine the functioning in particular of the international financial architecture, a process that is under way this week in

Washington and in which Australia is very pleased to be participating.

In dealing with the impact of globalization and to ensure we can take advantage of its benefits and opportunities, the very first responsibility, of course, rests with each and every one of us to ensure that we have in place the appropriate domestic policies and mechanisms, including prudent corporate governance and efficient and transparent financial sectors.

International cooperation has a valuable role to play in helping countries address deficiencies in these areas, and it is important to recall that a number of initiatives are already very well established. Technical assistance programmes are helping to develop, strengthen and reform existing mechanisms and institutional frameworks in developing countries so they can better exploit the opportunities globalization has to offer.

My Government has been very closely involved in a number of such programmes at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. In the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (APEC), we are leading efforts to strengthen the capacities of our regional partners, including particularly in this area of corporate governance.

At the multilateral level, the efforts of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in responding to the difficulties faced most recently by Thailand, Indonesia and Korea underline its key role. We are very pleased to have made a major contribution to each of those assistance packages. In the case of the Indonesian package, we worked particularly hard to ensure that greater recognition was given to understanding and managing the social impact of the economic reforms that were being introduced, something that my colleague from Bangladesh has just underlined and something that I think the United Nations would do well in particular to focus on.

The IMF itself has acknowledged that it has learned from its experience in responding to the economic crisis in East Asia. While the affected economies proceed with implementing structural reforms which will provide a stronger foundation for future economic growth, there has also emerged a recognition of the importance of strengthening the existing international financial architecture.

I think it is important that in examining ways to do this and asking ourselves what is it that the United Nations can and should do, it is vitally important that the commitment to strengthening the international trading system does not wane. Countries need to work together bilaterally, regionally and through the World Trade Organization (WTO) to ensure that the momentum towards further liberalization of the international trading system is maintained.

Cooperation and partnership at the international level can do a good deal to promote global best practice in financial systems, improve transparency and strengthen national capacities. Considerable effort is already under way in a number of forums in and around the Bretton Woods institutions — not least the discussions to which I referred, which are taking place in Washington this week.

The United Nations, we believe, has an important role in the broader discussion of globalization, working with rather than attempting to duplicate the role of other international agencies and forums. We need always to consider where expertise lies and how the United Nations can add value. In this connection, the United Nations development agencies have a very important place in assisting the developing countries themselves address the social implications of recent economic difficulties. There is scope, we believe, to redirect some resources to address the adverse social implications of economic volatility in a number of vulnerable countries — indeed, it is good to note that some agencies have already made progress in this regard.

The recent high-level dialogue on globalization was an invaluable opportunity for countries to share their experiences and exchange views on how international cooperation can assist. We felt very encouraged by this debate. We thought it was remarkably free of some of the polemic that characterizes North-South exchanges in this House. We felt very appreciative to all those who were involved, and we look forward to that spirit prevailing as we continue to debate globalization throughout this session of the General Assembly.

My delegation generally looks forward to contributing to the ongoing discussion of this important issue of globalization and with the other challenges which the Secretary-General has identified in the report that we are considering in this first substantive plenary meeting of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): First of all, the Mongolian delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for presenting a concise but comprehensive report on the work of the Organization and on a partnership for global community. Like the previous one,

this year's report highlights the most significant aspects of the United Nations activities and points out the immediate and long-term tasks facing the Organization. The report is thought-provoking and addresses many of the challenges that lie ahead for the international community.

The fact that this item is being considered immediately after the general debate is in itself significant. This provides representatives the opportunity to look back at the work of this Organization — in fact, at the collective work of the Member States and the Secretariat — in a broad context, instead of just examining one or another aspect of United Nations activities. In today's context, such a debate provides the opportunity to view United Nations activities through the prism of the ongoing "quiet revolution", looking towards its further improvement as an indispensable instrument for the cooperation of States in the next millennium.

We believe that the report is balanced; it is analytical and provides reference material. It shows what has been achieved during the past year and what still needs to be done. Therefore, we welcome the report as a good basis for our debate.

Since my delegation will have the opportunity to comment on specific aspects of the report when agenda items are discussed here in the plenary and in the Main Committees, at this stage I would like to touch upon the following few questions.

With regard to United Nations reform, since we all agree that the reform is a process and not an event, it cannot be achieved overnight. My delegation believes that during its fifty-second session the General Assembly was able to do a great deal of work, as reflected in the report. However, during the current session we still need to address the pending issues concerning the sunset provisions, the question of adopting a results-based budget system, the terms for establishing the Development Account and some others. However, we believe that the success of the reform of the Organization could be judged, in the final analysis, on the basis of real improvements in responding to the urgent and vital challenges that lie ahead and the impact on the lives of ordinary peoples. Accordingly, we believe that the reform should focus on strengthening the role of the Organization in the promotion of development. The role of the General Assembly as the main deliberative and decision-making organ of the United Nations, in which all Member States participate equally, should be enhanced in accordance, of course, with the United Nations Charter.

No reform of the United Nations would be complete without the reform of the Security Council. In this respect my delegation welcomes the steps taken by the Security Council in response to General Assembly resolutions, especially with respect to its working procedures and transparency. This work should be continued. Though the Open-ended Working Group has made some progress, especially with respect to cluster II issues, no progress, unfortunately, has been made on the cluster I issues, especially on the expansion of the Security Council and curtailing the veto malpractice. These questions should be addressed squarely if we are to enter the next millennium with a more effective and efficient United Nations.

My delegation agrees with the Secretary-General that the Millennium Assembly, expected to be held in September 2000, should be used as a unique opportunity to define clearly what kind of United Nations the international community envisions and would support in the new century. The preparatory work for the Millennium Assembly should start as soon as possible so as to enable the Member States not only to elaborate their common strategic vision of the world and the role of the United Nations in it, but also to identify as clearly as possible the ways and means of achieving these ends. Without the latter, the noble aims and strategic vision risk remaining an unfulfilled aspiration.

The section on peace and security clearly demonstrates that the United Nations is called upon to play a very important role in prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building — and indeed, it can do so. In this respect, my delegation would like to underline the positive role that the Secretary-General played in defusing the tension in the Persian Gulf area last February, although, as he has underlined in his report,

> "Unfortunately, the situation in Iraq still appears to be far from resolution." *(A/53/1, para. 24)*

Turning to the part on disarmament, my delegation would like to underline its support for the efforts of the international community to further promote the cause of nuclear disarmament. In this regard, we support the eight-nation declaration on creating a nuclear-weapon-free world as an important step in the wake of the troubling nuclear-weapon tests in South Asia. It is in this context that Mongolia welcomes the declaration of the People's Republic of China not to resume nuclear tests and expresses the hope that the latest encouraging signs from South Asia will be followed up with concrete actions that would lead to strengthening the non-proliferation regime

and move us closer to nuclear disarmament. We believe that the two ad hoc committees established in the Conference on Disarmament could be instrumental in increasing the security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States and in banning the production of fissile material for nuclear-explosive devices.

When it comes to the question of international security, every nation, big and small alike, can and should make its contributions. As a Member of the United Nations, Mongolia is striving to make its contribution in promoting confidence and the goals of disarmament. Thus Mongolia recently published its white book on defence, sent its reply to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and took steps to participate in peacekeeping activities. Moreover, having declared its territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone, it is now actively working to institutionalize its nuclear-weapon-free status, which would make its territory an area of peace, stability and predictability. In 1999, Mongolia, together with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, will host an international conference in Mongolia to focus on the pressing disarmament and other security-related issues of the region.

Turning to the sections of the report on cooperation for development and globalization, my delegation would like to underline the enormous work being carried out by the United Nations Development Group, as well as its support for the creation of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, which, as the Secretary-General points out, permit a new strategic approach to the implementation of goals agreed to at United Nations global conferences and of national development priorities. Likewise, we commend the efforts of the United Nations, especially the United Nations Development Programme and the World Food Programme, in combating poverty.

One of the factors, or should I say handicaps, that negatively affects the development of some 30 developing countries is lack of access to the sea due to their geographical location. This has been recognized by the international community, and some concrete steps are being taken by the United Nations to address this and related issues. It would have been very useful if the report had shed some light on the steps taken in this field within the United Nations system.

Turning to the section on strengthening the international legal order, my delegation would like to underline the importance of the outcome of the Rome Conference, especially the adoption and signature by many States of the Statute of the International Criminal Court. We fully agree with the Secretary-General that

> "Although many would have preferred the Court to have been vested with more far-reaching powers, one should not minimize the breakthrough that was achieved." *(A/53/1, para. 181)*

The Court's general jurisdiction over such crimes as genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression should be strengthened further during the subsequent work in the preparatory commission that is to be established soon.

Finally, in the view of my delegation, the report should have focused more extensively on the question of combating international terrorism and on the ways and means to enhance international cooperation in this field. We hope that these comments and observations will be taken into account by the Secretary-General in his activities and reflected in the next report.

Mr. Ordzhonikidze (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The key points of the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization reaffirm convincingly that the United Nations, being the sole universal international Organization — better equipped than any other world body to formulate agreed approaches and to resolve conflict situations — can provide appropriate responses to the global challenges faced by the international community at the turn of the millennium.

It is from this standpoint that the Russian Federation is evaluating the United Nations reforms launched by the Secretary-General, intended, as we see it, to rationally adapt United Nations mechanisms to today's needs. We support the carrying out of reforms that will promote effective consolidation of the entire Organization and help improve its efficiency in addressing urgent global challenges.

We share the ideas expressed by the Secretary-General on the increasing importance of preventive diplomacy. The international community has developed a unique arsenal of political and diplomatic tools which should be used to resolve every international issue. This arsenal must be put to effective use.

The fact that the Iraqi crisis earlier this year was settled precisely by political means, through the joint efforts of many States, and through the initiatives launched by the Secretary-General, provided graphic

evidence that constructive and active diplomacy can be far more efficient than exclusive reliance on military force.

The Secretary-General's proposals on stepped-up cooperation between the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council — including through the invigoration of Article 65 of the Charter, dealing with cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council — as well as on cooperation between the United Nations and Member States in the area of preventive diplomacy, merit support.

Peacekeeping operations remain a key instrument for resolving conflicts and crisis situations after all means of preventive diplomacy have been exhausted. We believe that the main principles and criteria governing peacekeeping operations should include the existence of an actual threat to international or regional peace and security and a guarantee that the Security Council will play a key part in settling all political issues relating to operations, first and foremost, issues relating to the possible use of military force.

We call for the further consolidation of interaction between the United Nations and regional organizations in peacekeeping activities, in conformity with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. At the same time, promotion of such cooperation should not serve to undermine the key role of the United Nations in that highly important area. We deem it necessary to continue to develop a concept of post-conflict peace-building. Development of parameters and practical guidelines for the rehabilitation of societies destroyed by wars could give impetus to such a concept.

Sanctions as an instrument of international enforcement require a highly balanced approach. We fully share this point of view with the Secretary-General. When introduced by the Security Council, sanctions should not become a tool to fight a regime simply because it is disliked. It is necessary to have clarity of goals every time sanctions are introduced and to agree well in advance upon clearly defined conditions and mechanisms for their lifting and possible gradual easing. Sanctions should not make people suffer. They should not destabilize the economic situation either in a country subject to them or in the surrounding region.

We welcome the attempt made by the Secretary-General to define the United Nations role in addressing social and economic problems related to the current phase of globalization and its consequences, both positive and negative. Nowadays, it is clear to everybody that we cannot rely exclusively on market elements. There is a need for adequate mechanisms that would reasonably regulate financial and economic processes at a national and international level.

We welcome the fact that the United Nations has taken the lead over the last year in outlining approaches to resolving arising problems in the following ways: a high-level meeting held by the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions within the framework of the Economic and Social Council; a dialogue between Government officials, members of the business community and representatives of civil society on the role played by industry in ensuring sustainable development, as was first initiated within the framework of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD); and high-level meetings held in order to resume a dialogue on international economic cooperation for development through partnership.

The closer we get to the Millennium Assembly, the more pressing becomes the issue of formulating the key topics that the Assembly will discuss. It is obvious that under conditions of a new phase of the global financial crisis, that forum must focus on how to work out the ways of overcoming the consequences of the crisis and preventing new setbacks.

Among our main priorities is human rights, which should become a unifying source for international cooperation based on equal rights. The formation of such cooperation in the interest of security, democracy and development depends on the ability and readiness of the international community to overcome double standards, considerations of political expediency and selective approaches. The sooner such approaches are implemented, the faster we will manage to dispel the illusion, mentioned in the Secretary-General's report, that the interests of the majority can be served by violating the rights of the minority. The international community should not put up with the fact that nowadays those dangerous illusions serve as a basis for State policies in some parts of the world.

We are concerned that, due to the lack of financial resources, according to the report's conclusion, some vital operations of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will have to be scaled down or even, in some cases, suspended. For Russia, as well as for other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, the humanitarian imperative is to implement accurately and consistently the decisions of the Geneva regional conference on addressing the problems of refugees in the former of the

republics of the Soviet Union. We believe that not only the Geneva conference itself but also its follow-up activities should set an example of international cooperation to resolve acute humanitarian problems.

We fully share the thesis contained in the report that the international order must be based on international law. This is fully concordant with the pivotal idea of the need for "invoking the force of law rather than the law of force" *(A/53/PV.9)*, as expressed by Mr. Igor S. Ivanov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia to the General Assembly at this session's general debate. The finalization of the Statute of the International Criminal Court Statute is a considerable step in that direction.

We support the further intensification of collective efforts under the aegis of the United Nations, as the Secretary-General rightly recommends in his report, to counteract the transnationalization of uncivil elements of society — first and foremost, illegal drugs, organized crime and terrorism. Maximum efforts must be made to implement relevant decisions adopted at the special session of the General Assembly in order to stand up to the drugs threat. We hope that at the present session the General Assembly will manage to adopt the draft international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism, introduced by our country. The constructive progress of work on the draft convention against organized transnational crime also gives rise to optimism.

We note with satisfaction that the introduction of institutional reforms in the United Nations system's activities has been successfully initiated. We believe that the consistent and pragmatic implementation of the entire set of reforms launched by the Secretary-General will further increase the efficiency of the Organization's work, particularly of its Secretariat, the working structure that plays an important role in the everyday, practical activities of the United Nations.

In this regard, the Russian delegation counts on a fruitful and detailed exchange of views at this session on the whole array of issues related to the reform of the Organization's personnel policy, which has long been overdue.

In conclusion, we wish once again to voice concern, clearly enunciated by the Secretary-General, over the United Nations financial situation. The perpetuation of the Organization's overly protracted financial crisis not only threatens the implementation of current mandates and programmes approved by all Member States, but also undermines the role and authority of the Organization in the international arena.

In general, the Secretary-General's report clearly shows that our Organization has the potential and machinery necessary to continue playing its unique role in coordinating the joint efforts of Member States to strengthen peace and security, meet the new challenges to humanity at the turn of the millennium, and advance towards the new horizons of multilateral cooperation.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): At the outset, allow me to convey the Chinese delegation's gratitude to the Secretary-General for the annual report he has prepared on the work of the Organization. The Chinese delegation has read the report from cover to cover. I take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for the untiring efforts he has made in the past year in carrying out the tasks this Organization has entrusted to him and in enhancing the role of the United Nations. We also appreciate the important role he played in the crisis early this year surrounding the inspection of Iraqi weapons, in the facilitation of the settlement of regional conflicts in Africa, in the promotion of the reform of the United Nations system and in many other fields.

The international situation, generally speaking, has remained stable over the past year, but new regional conflicts have surfaced frequently. The Secretary-General points out in his report that new challenges have continuously emerged in the political, economic, financial, security and other fields. We believe that peace and development, the two major themes of today's world, should be the central tasks of the work of the United Nations.

Over the past year, the United Nations has continued to play an active role in maintaining world peace and security. While committed to the resolution of conflicts, the Organization has also paid much attention to exploring and resolving their root causes. A good case in point in this connection were the two Security Council meetings at the level of Foreign Minister on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. Progress has also been made in the disarmament field.

Very disturbingly, however, the nuclear tests this year and the regional arms race in South Asia have posed serious challenges to the peace and security of that region and the world at large. We fully endorse the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his report that the

United Nations should continue to work, together with the international community, to facilitate the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, safeguard the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and maintain the peace, security and stability of South Asia and the world as a whole.

Although developing countries have emphasized time and again that the question of development should be top priority, it worries us to see that the core resources for United Nations operational activities are decreasing. As the Secretary-General points out in his report, official development assistance around the globe has dropped to an all-time low, now standing at only 0.22 per cent of the gross national product of developed countries and a mere 0.19 per cent for the seven most developed. We cannot help but be concerned at this development. We hope that all developed countries will show their due sense of responsibility on the question of financing, implement the relevant General Assembly resolutions in real earnest, and reach the agreed targets on the issue of voluntary contributions as soon as possible.

The elimination of poverty is a major task facing most developing countries. We appreciate the fact that institutions within the United Nations system have made the elimination of poverty a shared goal for inter-institutional coordination. The efforts of the United Nations in helping the developing countries to achieve sustainable development are also commendable. In the new circumstances, the United Nations should work even harder to solve the problems facing developing countries, especially in the fields of boosting investment and growth, addressing the challenges of globalization, making the necessary readjustments and avoiding the eruption of economic and social crises. All these efforts can, as a matter of fact, be called the preventive diplomacy that we often talk about. They can also help eradicate the root cause of regional conflicts.

Over the past year, the United Nations has also made progress in the field of human rights. The Chinese Government has actively supported and participated in the United Nations activities in this field and is gradually accelerating the process of improving its democracy and rule of law. Not long ago, Mrs. Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, paid a successful visit to China. She is satisfied with the progress China has made in the area of human rights and grateful for China's support for the United Nations work in this field. In October last year, China signed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. This morning, China signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This demonstrates the Chinese Government's important support for the United Nations work in human rights.

The financial crisis of the United Nations is yet another urgent matter that warrants our concern. It has deteriorated further over the past year. This problem has not only seriously affected the daily operations of the United Nations, but also hindered the deepening of its reform. The definitive solution is for the major contributor in particular to move quickly to pay its arrears, in full and without condition. No State Member of the United Nations has any excuse to shirk from its responsibilities to the Organization.

The times demand and the general membership of the Organization as a whole aspires to the reasonable and appropriate reform of the United Nations. Over the past year, the General Assembly has adopted resolutions endorsing the Secretary-General's reform measures in the Secretariat and has accepted some of his proposals for reforming the United Nations system. However, as was pointed out by the Secretary-General himself, the adoption of these resolutions is not the end of the reform process, but rather the starting point for Member States to explore the direction of the reform of the United Nations. This session of the General Assembly will, on the one hand, closely follow the implementation of the reform measures already adopted and, on the other, continue to consider some long-term reform proposals put forward by the Secretary-General. The Chinese delegation hopes that an earnest and thorough study of the proposals will be conducted on the basis of open and wide-ranging discussions.

The United Nations has made an extraordinary journey over more than half a century. As the most important intergovernmental organization in the world, it has unique and indispensable roles on the international political and economic scenes. The Chinese delegation hopes that the debate on the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization will help Member States better to summarize the lessons and experiences of that work further to improve the Organization's efficiency and define its major tasks, so that it can enter the twenty-first century with a new look and make new contributions to the maintenance of peace and the promotion of development.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations A/53/PV.28

General Assembly
Fifty-third Session

Official Records

28th plenary meeting
Monday, 5 October 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka (Uganda), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 10 *(continued)*

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/1)

Mr. Čalovski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): We have before us a very important and useful document by the Secretary-General on the work of our Organization. It contains important information, observations and, most welcome of all, views on the current international situation and international cooperation. It also reflects on the future role and priorities of our Organization and on the difficulties it is facing at present. All this is very helpful to all Member States, particularly those that cannot have cannot have large delegations in the various United Nations bodies, including the General Assembly. I am sure that the Secretary General's report, together with the reports prepared by the Secretariat on each agenda item, will help delegations in their work during the present session of the General Assembly.

When I mention other reports prepared by the Secretariat for the present session of the General Assembly, I have particularly the "Annotated preliminary list of items to be included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-third regular session of the General Assembly" (A/53/100). This report, assembled in an exemplary and professional manner by the Secretariat, is extremely important for the preparations of our delegations, both before the start of the session and during its work. The fact that each representative keeps this important document on his or her working table, together with the United Nations Charter and the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, illustrates its importance and usefulness.

The Republic of Macedonia agrees with the Secretary General's statement in the report that "nations large and small are grappling with new responsibilities and new constraints" and his complaint that "unpredictability and surprise have become almost commonplace". *(A/53/1, para. 1)*

In our view, the paramount task of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly is to illuminate our vision of the twenty-first century of international relations and cooperation and to reduce the uncertainties and the surprises. This must occur in all fields of our activities, be they political, economic or social, as well as in the field of strengthening observance of international law. In order to achieve results in this respect, the General Assembly's activities should be focused and well coordinated with those of the other United Nations organs. Here, the role of Secretary General is of crucial importance. We are happy to note that he has been successfully discharging his duty to the benefit of our Organization and of all Member States.

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This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

To improve the future international situation, many activities should be initiated and carried out within the United Nations, in the other international bodies and at the national level. The globalization of the planet forces us to find global solutions. In that process, which should be rational, the establishment of international and national priorities is unavoidable. The fact is that small countries, whether in transition or not, are those most adversely affected by the worsening of international relations and by the growing uncertainties of the present. From this perspective, one can successfully argue that the priority of the present session of the General Assembly should be the prevention of all conflicts, the resolution of those currently taking place and the enhancement of world economic cooperation, taking into account not only the larger economies but also the difficulties of the small and weak economies of many developing countries and countries in transition.

In view of the nature of my country's foreign policy, I would like to stress the importance of the Secretary-General's statement in paragraphs 43 and 44 of his report. The deployment of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) on our northern and western borders since 1992, when the Republic of Macedonia was not a member of the United Nations, should be seen as a success story of preventive diplomacy by the United Nations, the Secretary-General and the Security Council. Any effort to help the stability of our region is important and highly appreciated.

At present the stability of our region depends very much on developments in Kosovo and Metohija. Just a few days ago, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia stressed, from this rostrum, the urgency of finding a political solution. It is high time to proceed in that direction.

Since I am mentioning the problems in my country's region, it is important for me to stress two matters that are of serious concern to my country and to other countries of the region at the present moment. The first is the integration of our economies into the economy of the European Union; the second is our full-fledged membership in the Euro-Atlantic institutions. Advancement on both of these priorities would immensely help the stability of our region. Hesitation, however, could generate uncertainties and problems.

The President took the Chair.

Throughout his report, the Secretary-General reflects on topics of the day, on the new roles that may be required of the multilateral organizations and on what kind of United Nations we would like to have in the coming century. We share his view that the proposed Millennium Assembly is a useful and adequate opportunity to come up with the expected vision. In the endeavour to agree on a common vision, the mutual interests of and respect for all Member States should be taken into account. The implementation of the United Nations Charter should be the aim. The relevance of the United Nations should be enhanced, particularly that of the General Assembly and the Security Council. The culture of multilateralism should also be enhanced. The maturity of agreement should be the basis for decisions. Each economy should be helped to grow. The observance of international law should be strengthened. The goal, of course, should be peace, development, justice and enhanced international cooperation. The world in the twenty-first century will be difficult to imagine without a United Nations that is more relevant.

The reform of the United Nations should therefore continue. The priority should be to strengthen the relevance of the General Assembly in world affairs by adopting a new arrangement, one that is more effective, more rational, more democratic and less costly than the present arrangement. A new arrangement, enabling all Member States, large or small, to participate in and contribute to the result-oriented activities of the General Assembly, is a clear necessity.

My delegation is pleased with the way the Secretary-General's report is structured; this enhances its usefulness. We know the priorities of the Secretary-General's agenda. I am pleased to state that we share his views and expectations for our deliberations in the coming months and in 1999.

On this occasion I would like to make a few brief observations. In our view, it is time that we started to consider the implications of conventional armaments and armed forces for international peace and security. Among other developments, the production of conventional arms, particularly offensive weapons and small arms, is increasing; the arms trade is increasing; illicit trafficking is increasing; and military forces are becoming larger. These are very unhealthy developments from the standpoint of the need to help maintain international peace and security. Each country has the right to have sufficient weapons for its national defence. However,

when it has more than it needs, that becomes a security problem for the region and for neighbouring countries.

Transparency must be enhanced, and cooperative arrangements should be supported. In that respect, I would like to mention that the Republic of Macedonia has ratified the Ottawa Convention on landmines. We consider that Convention to be a first and very important step by the international community against the abuse of conventional weapons.

Terrorism is a subject which requires our immediate attention. To condemn terrorism in all its aspects and manifestations is not enough. The present international and national efforts against terrorism should be enhanced everywhere. By fighting terrorism we are at the same time fighting illicit drug-trafficking, money-laundering and various social ills. The establishment of the International Criminal Court will also help anti-terrorist activities. We are in favour of concluding a legally binding international instrument against terrorism.

Growth and sustainable development are essential for the eradication of poverty and for the improvement of the political, economic and social situation in every country, developed or developing. Among other things, the enhancement of democratization, the observance of the rule of law and the observance of human rights very much depend on the success or failure of this process.

We are therefore pleased that in his report the Secretary-General elaborates his views on many aspects of development. From our perspective, what he says in paragraphs 110 and 112 need to be particularly emphasized. Enabling countries to be effectively and beneficially integrated into the global economy is in everyone's interest. Nobody can benefit from the marginalization of any country in the world economy. We would like to fully endorse what he says in paragraph 234. It is true that globalization is an irreversible process. It is also true that it is a manageable phenomenon. The task, therefore, should be to harness its positive potential.

I would like to conclude by expressing the great satisfaction of my delegation with both the form and the content of the Secretary-General's report. We will use it as an important guide in our activities at the present session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Moreno Fernández (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me first of all to thank the Secretary-General for the new report submitted this year; like those that have preceded it, it is comprehensive, imaginative and effective.

There can be no doubt that, as the Secretary-General states in his report on the work of the Organization, more than a decade after the end of the cold war

> "the contours of the new era remain poorly understood." (*A/53/1, para. 1*)

However, it is also clear that many of the peoples and Governments that make up the United Nations today are struggling with the most challenging contradiction: the rich are becoming richer, and the poor are becoming poorer. Those peoples and Governments are hoping for action and for changes in the United Nations and in the current multilateral system — changes that should not be limited to redefining and updating priorities and existing structures.

The process of reforming, modernizing and democratizing the United Nations is facing a tough challenge, which is deeply rooted in the division of powers and jurisdictions and in the interrelationship between the principal organs of our Organization, in particular the Security Council and the General Assembly.

We agree with the Secretary-General's statement that "peace in many parts of the world remains precarious". *(A/53/1, para. 17)*

The Organization has devoted funds in the millions to peacekeeping operations, to political missions and to special missions. However, far from providing solutions to conflicts, in many cases the conflicts and their consequences have become more intense.

We should not allow the preventive actions of the Organization to be designed on the basis of cost-benefit approaches. The United Nations cannot apply a standard solution to its work in the field because every country, every situation of tension, every potential crisis and every conflict requires a different analysis, treatment and solution.

Resolution 46/59, adopted by consensus, entrusted the General Assembly with the power of sending fact-finding missions. Cuba hopes that in the Organization's new initiatives and efforts for preventive diplomacy, the letter and the spirit of that resolution will be complied with.

The General Assembly must play the fundamental role in adopting initiatives in the area of post-conflict peace-building, and, I would repeat yet again, the consent of Member States is an essential requirement for the implementation of such initiatives.

We must guarantee coordination and transparency among all the principal organs of the Organization in the decision-making processes with regard to the preparation of standby forces, the establishment of special missions and political offices and the creation of headquarters for rapid deployment missions.

Strengthening the Organization's rapid response capability for the maintenance of international peace and security cannot be an exclusive function of the Security Council.

In recent months the issue of nuclear disarmament has been the subject of significant international declarations. Of unquestioned far-reaching importance was the declaration issued by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) calling for the holding of an international conference, preferably in 1999, with the purpose of securing agreement before the end of the millennium on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament within a specific time-frame.

Nuclear disarmament should be the top priority in disarmament. Holding a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament should continue to be an objective to be achieved as early as possible.

At the same time, the ad hoc committee on fissile material should negotiate a convention that will represent a practical and real step forward towards disarmament and not simply a further non-proliferation measure.

This year, 1998, marks not only the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but also the fifth anniversary of the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action succeeded in codifying a genuine political consensus on world cooperation in the domain of human rights upholding the recognition of the diverse nature of those rights and articulating the interdependent nature and the interrelationship among democracy, development and human rights. However, the imbalance in mandates and initiatives in favour of civil and political rights is steadily growing.

Along with many other States, Cuba takes the view that the interdependent nature of development and human rights recognized at Vienna, and repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, postulates a symmetrical link. If one of the parts of that link is consistently given preferential consideration, this will create an asymmetry that jeopardizes the very bases of the Vienna consensus.

At the same time, it must be noted that the assertion that work is under way "to provide substantive content to the concept of the right to development" (ibid., *para. 77*) causes concern for many States Members.

It is not now a question of promoting theoretical efforts but of fostering practical actions and, above all, of fostering the necessary political will to give effect to the articles of the Declaration dealing with the right to development.

We fully support the Secretary-General's view that

> "Meeting our commitment to enhancing economic and social development, particularly in countries in the greatest need, is an increasingly challenging task." (ibid., *para. 121*)

The Organization's lofty objectives in the area of development are being affected by the decline in official resources devoted to development and, in particular, by the fall in contributions from traditional donors to the United Nations basic resources, the keystone of the system of operational activities for development.

The reforms carried out in the economic and social sectors have not been enough, and neither have those adopted by the United Nations funds and programmes, to convince donors of the urgent need to salvage multilateralism for development. On the other hand, we note with concern the increase in non-core resources and an attendant increase in conditionalities — very often concealed — on international cooperation for development. We must preserve the universal, multilateral, neutral and non-reimbursable nature of activities for development.

Cuba is closely monitoring developments in the experimental phase of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The results of this experiment should be considered by the appropriate intergovernmental bodies. We regard this exercise involving the broadest and most direct participation on the part of Governments of recipient countries designed to bolster the coordination of operational activities in this

field. The programming of resources should continue to be the prerogative of the Governments involved and of the governing bodies of each fund, programme or specialized agency.

These issues and others, such as the role of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, should be considered comprehensively by the General Assembly in the course of the three-yearly review of the policy of operational activities, which sets the normative and legal framework for United Nations operational activities.

We have studied carefully the proposal to introduce result-based budgeting as a new concept in the context of the Organization's new initiative in the areas of administration and management. We cannot ignore the significant changes that a proposal of that nature would involve, and, accordingly, we would reaffirm the need for the General Assembly to undertake an in-depth and comprehensive study of this proposal before it is put into effect.

Cuba shares the concern expressed by the Secretary-General at the serious financial situation of the Organization. It is vital to reaffirm the need for the major contributor to pay all its contributions on time, in full and without conditions. This situation has without doubt been and continues to be the main cause of the Organization's current precarious financial situation.

Cuba reaffirms its readiness to fulfil its obligations undertaken pursuant to the Charter. Proof of this unswerving commitment are Cuba's successful efforts this year to reduce its debt substantially in the midst of the difficult economic situation that the country is experiencing, which is aggravated, as is well known, by the economic, financial and commercial embargo imposed on us by the Government of the United States.

Promotion of respect for international law and the progressive development and subsequent codification of international law should be unchanging goals of the United Nations and guiding principles for the decisions of its principal organs. The United Nations should prevent international law from continuing to be held hostage to the hegemonic interests and supposed national security priorities of powerful countries. The law of treaties should be respected and applied. We must curb the steadily growing tendency for certain States to resort to the imposition of unilateral coercive measures against other States in blatant contravention of the principle of the sovereign equality of States and the most basic rules of international law.

The process of creating an international justice system should be based on respect for the national law and internal legal order of States and implementation of the rules and principles of international law. No international criminal institution can be credible if from the very outset it is designed solely to judge the alleged flaws, threats and offenses of the countries of the South.

Cuba believes that it is not right to speak now of "attainable objectives" for the Organization. It is well known that the main commitments undertaken at the large number of important United Nations conferences have been totally ignored by most of the Member States that possess economic and financial resources but that lack sufficient political will to make good on those commitments. There is no need for the most powerful States Members of the United Nations to continue seeking to create and impose patterns of world government upon other States. What must prevail is respect for the principles of diversity in the membership and of the universal character of the Organization.

The United Nations, of course, needs to hold a Millennium Assembly — but it must be a legitimate and truly democratic Assembly to which all Member States without exception will feel they are invited, on an equal footing, by the imperatives of human solidarity. Moreover, we need an Organization that will honestly study how to reduce the growing imbalance in the distribution of world power and that, on behalf of all, will truly promote peace among 185 equally sovereign States.

The developing countries hope that multilateralism, in particular as it is reflected in the United Nations, will promote international cooperation that will make it possible to counteract the impact of the process of globalization in its neoliberal guise, which embraces all aspects of our lives, but which in most cases, far from bringing prosperity and well-being for our peoples, is globalizing underdevelopment, globalizing extreme poverty, globalizing unemployment and globalizing the volatility of the world economy.

The peoples and the Governments of the developing world want to be informed actors in a true process of globalization in order to prevent any attempt in the name of that process to impose upon us development models

that are alien to the historical, cultural and economic characteristics of our countries.

Mr. Salander (Sweden): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden — to present our views on the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization.

We welcome the new format of both the report itself and the debate which has focused to a greater extent on the core areas of the United Nations. This was the role envisaged by the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System, and we believe that the report and its oral introduction by the Secretary-General contribute to a more lively debate on the role of the United Nations in today's world.

The fifty-second session of the General Assembly was indeed a Reform Assembly. The institutional reforms the Secretary-General pursued throughout the year are beginning to bear fruit. The organization of work into four core areas — peace and security, development cooperation, international economic and social affairs and humanitarian affairs — has helped the United Nations system to focus its work. This will improve the coordination of the activities of the United Nations and lead to greater impact for its programmes.

Human rights is now being dealt with as a cross-cutting issue. The Nordic countries look forward to the results of the review of the human rights machinery. We hope this will contribute to the integration of human rights aspects into all United Nations activities and to the strengthening of the implementation of human rights. The commemoration of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should first and foremost take place in the daily activities of our Governments and our international institutions.

Integration within the United Nations system is also moving ahead at the country level. We can already see some encouraging results of the "one country, one United Nations" policy that the Nordic countries have been advocating for many years. We believe that the integration of United Nations representation at the country level will prove to be one of the greatest achievements of the ongoing reform process, leading to substantive improvements and greater coherence in relations between the United Nations system and host countries. This is something we will all benefit from.

The political and financial support of the Nordic countries for multilateralism in general and for the United Nations itself in particular is well known and remains strong. We continue to provide the United Nations system with extensive voluntary contributions for development cooperation and with substantial human and financial resources for peacekeeping operations. This particular area of United Nations activities has been highly successful over the 50 years that have passed since the first mission was launched. Today's peacekeeping challenges differ from those of the past. There needs to be a stronger linkage between political, military and humanitarian responses to crisis situations. The early-action capacity needs to be enhanced and peacekeeping financing secured on a collective basis. The Nordic countries will continue actively to contribute to this ongoing process of change.

While there is a need to continue to develop the capabilities of United Nations peacekeeping, there is also a strong need to focus increasingly on conflict prevention. A variety of complementary activities within a strategic framework should be envisaged from addressing the root causes of a conflict to preventive deployment of a United Nations presence. Many lives can be spared by early action. Regional efforts — for instance, by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe — are essential and should continue to be encouraged in this regard.

This year will be remembered for discouraging developments in the nuclear field. A case in point is the nuclear tests conducted earlier this year that contradict the international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. We cannot but continue to urge the countries concerned to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without delay and without conditions.

On the managerial reform process, the Nordic countries fully support the Secretary-General in his endeavours to introduce a results-oriented budgeting system in the United Nations. We agree with the Secretary-General when he states in his report that,

> "This initiative is of the utmost importance, because no single measure would do more to increase accountability and efficiency in the work of the Organization." *(A/53/1, para. 9)*

The public sectors in our own countries have matched decisions on political mandates with their financing, and budgets have been tied to actual results for more than a decade. Our own experience shows promising results.

A budgeting system that will focus on the actual achievements of the mandates and programmes will contribute to greater efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and impact of the work of the Organization. I must stress that this is not about cutting costs. It is about using the funds where they will contribute the most.

During this session of the General Assembly we will also continue that process with important decisions on reform initiatives in the environmental field.

The adoption in Rome this year of the Statute for the permanent International Criminal Court constitutes a landmark contribution to the rule of law. It is an urgent task for this session of the General Assembly to put this historic treaty in place.

The reform of the United Nations is taking place at an extraordinary time in human history and in a world greatly affected by globalization. If we were to summarize this year's general debate, we would note that globalization was mentioned by almost everyone. It is clear that globalization creates both opportunities and risks. It is the role of the international community to ensure that we benefit from the opportunities of globalization while minimizing the risks it poses. Multilateralism should flourish in a globalized world. I would like to quote what the Secretary-General said in Durban:

> "There is a temptation to retreat into our shells, to go back to the old economies of centralized State planning and protectionism or to the old politics of emphasizing regional differences rather that recognizing universal values." *(SG/SM/6688)*

The Secretary-General made it clear that we cannot hold back the tide of technological and social change. We agree with him that we have to find a way to govern through action and to protect our citizens from the disadvantages while recognizing the benefits that a more globalized world brings.

Globalization is also taking place in civil society. The United Nations must learn how to come together with civil society, academia and non-governmental organizations to a much greater extent. The Millennium Assembly and the Millennium Forum will provide us with an arena to profit from such contacts and to learn how to work together for global causes. The Millennium Assembly will also provide us with the opportunity to express ourselves on the role of multilateralism and on our common expectations for the years to come. We are looking forward to the input of the Secretary-General in this regard.

Ms. Ramiro-Lopez (Philippines): I wish to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his statement and for his report contained in document A/53/1, which provides us with a comprehensive overview on the work of the United Nations during the past year.

The report reflects the increasing number of multifaceted tasks which we, the Member States, have entrusted to the Organization at a time of decreasing resources. My delegation shares the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General on the need to provide the Organization with timely and adequate resources. It must have the necessary financial support from us the Member States, if the Organization is to survive and be effective in addressing global issues of concern to all of us. We join the Secretary-General in his appeal to Member States in arrears to honour their legal obligation and pay their assessed dues in full and without further delay.

My delegation recognizes the important efforts of the Secretary-General to reform and improve the efficiency of the Organization. The General Assembly, at the last session, endorsed several of his reform proposals. We welcome those decisions which are aimed at strengthening the Organization to enable it to implement fully all mandated programmes and activities, as well as to meet the changing needs and requirements of the Member States as we prepare for the next century. We reiterate the view that the primary objective of any further reform efforts should be to strengthen the role of the United Nations in promoting international cooperation for development and to restore development issues to the centre of the United Nations agenda.

The General Assembly, at this session, will continue its consideration of the Secretary-General's proposals for long-term changes. We hope that these proposals will be considered in an open and transparent manner that will enable all Member States to participate in the discussions. We believe that it is only in this manner that consensus can be reached.

On section I, concerning peace and security, my delegation supports the efforts of the United Nations in

the maintenance of international peace and security. We laud the initiatives undertaken by the Secretary-General in this regard. While we fully recognize the need to prevent disputes from escalating into the international arena, we believe that there is a need to have a common understanding and agreement on what constitutes preventive action. We therefore support the call of the Non-Aligned Movement for an early resumption of talks on the concept and definition of preventive diplomacy and preventive action.

In paragraph 26 of his report, the Secretary-General refers to "early warning of situations with the potential for crisis" and "an integrated preventive strategy". We would be interested in receiving details of these activities, such as the criteria used to classify a particular situation as a threat to international peace and security and the actions to be undertaken by the Organization. It is imperative to have greater transparency in these activities.

At the same time, we find the suggestion of the Secretary-General to broaden the role of the Security Council by invoking the mechanism provided in Article 65 of the United Nations Charter interesting. We believe, however, that this proposal calls for reflection and an in-depth consideration of its implications on the decision-making process of the Organization.

My delegation shares the view of the Secretary-General that the challenge of development remains paramount, and if there is one issue that cuts across United Nations activities, it is the issue of development. The significant and steady decline in official development assistance to developing countries is alarming and must be reversed. Now more than ever, social amelioration programmes and safety nets that directly benefit the most vulnerable sectors in many countries must be enhanced. Also, the difficulties posed by the external debt of developing countries remain unabated, and efforts to address them must be reinforced.

The Secretary-General stated in paragraph 168 of his report that

> "Globalization has an immense potential to improve people's lives, but it can disrupt — and destroy — them as well."

We believe that the United Nations can play a significant role in fostering international cooperation and action in mitigating the negative effects of globalization.

It has been a year since the financial crisis began in Asia, which now seems to affect countries on every continent. The chain of events that quickly unfolded brought to the fore the systemic weaknesses of the current global financial system. The imperatives of the new phenomenon of massive capital movements, with their inherent volatility and far-reaching impact, call for decisive action by the international community. The recent high-level dialogue on the social and economic impact of globalization and interdependence and their policy implications has provided us with useful exchanges on the current global crisis, and the time has come for collective action.

My delegation applauds the efforts of the Secretariat and the Secretary-General in responding to the mandate to achieve gender equality. We note the progress made in increasing women's representation in the Professional ranks and at the D-2 level and above from 16 per cent to 22 per cent. However, we believe that as we approach the next millennium further efforts need to be undertaken in respect of increasing representation at the senior level of the Secretariat by women from developing countries.

My delegation in general subscribes to the conclusions of the Secretary-General in section VII of his report. In particular, we share his view that only universal organizations like the United Nations have the scope and legitimacy to generate the principles, norms and rules that are essential if globalization is to benefit all. We agree that the task ahead of us is to harness the considerable potential of globalization for good while devising an option plan principally designed to avert its destructive forces. The forces of globalization must be tamed to service only development and prosperity. This we must do to sustain the development path of countries and lift countless people out of misery, especially in the region of Africa.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt): The Foreign Minister of Egypt, in his capacity as the Chairman of the delegation, congratulated you, Sir, on the assumption of your high office. It is now my turn to extend my own heartfelt congratulations to you and to wish you success.

I should like at the outset to thank the Secretary-General for his annual report on the work of the Organization. The report reflects his wisdom and his determination to achieve the lofty objectives of the United Nations. I should like also to thank the Secretary-General for his lucid and comprehensive introduction of the report at the beginning of the general debate.

The report deals with several important issues that require careful study and active follow-up by the General Assembly. Such follow-up should be guided by the views and the proposals made by the heads of State or Government and the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the course of the general debate.

In his annual report, the Secretary-General has proposed that at the Millennium Assembly, he will suggest a set of workable objectives and institutional means for the United Nations to meet the challenges of human solidarity in the years ahead. This initiative by the Secretary-General is welcomed by my delegation. However, we believe that in order to successfully and comprehensively evaluate the experiences of the past and to chart our future course, we should start this evaluation now.

In this context, the Foreign Minister of Egypt, in his statement in the general debate on 25 September 1998, proposed that this current session

> "create a committee to commence drafting a clear statement to history to be issued at the close of the next session." *(A/53/PV.15)*

This proposal aims at providing a statement which will include our assessment of the past and our vision of the future. It should be issued before the end of the century and at the beginning of the new millennium.

For this purpose, my delegation intends to initiate informal consultations to explore the possibility of adopting the necessary draft resolution establishing such a subsidiary organ and specifying its mandate during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly. My delegation hopes that this draft resolution will be adopted by consensus so as to reflect the collective vision of Member States in their evaluation of past achievements and the anticipation for the future and provide a solid basis for a more effective United Nations.

In this context also my delegation finds the Secretary-General's proposal to invoke the provisions of Article 65 of the Charter very interesting. We support an examination of all the relevant dimensions of Article 65. In point of fact, we support and encourage an examination of all the dormant Articles of the Charter. Some, such as Article 43, have never been used, and many delegations do not know why. We think that this is the time for such an exercise to start.

Mr. Adam (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*): I, too, should like to thank the Secretary-General for drafting and introducing on 21 September the report before us today.

The decision of the Secretary-General to introduce the report in plenary before the beginning of the general debate was a welcome innovation that gave the ministerial debate greater focus.

The document is of unquestioned interest. The description of the activities of the Organization makes it possible to judge the role and activities of our Organization in the light of the great changes taking place in the world.

Mr. Maidin (Brunei Darussalam), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Furthermore, the report offers our Secretary-General a new opportunity to present the initial results of his efforts to restore to the Organization the means and the dynamism that public opinion expects it to have.

The most important message of the report, I feel, is the observation that the new world environment continues to demand an in-depth reform of the Organization, along with great adaptability on the part of the Secretary-General, so that the Organization can gain the central role in international life that it deserves. We must guard against "reform fatigue", a weariness that could be fatal to our Organization.

This is why my delegation continues to fully support the Secretary-General in his efforts to transform the United Nations into a simpler, more integrated and more focused organization, able to accomplish its mission in its various fields with the maximum synergy and effectiveness.

The points made by the Secretary-General deserve even more support since they are part of a global restructuring initiative to adapt the entire Organization to the imperatives of the modern world. Such a process requires the resolute commitment of all Member States and deserves a collective, rapid and unequivocal response. Furthermore, the Secretary-General highlights well the fields and the crises in which the international community's responses have been imperfect, partial and sometimes marked by a narrow vision of the interests involved.

With a positive response by Member States and a better vision of the international general interest, we will have a clearer idea of the global role of the Organization in international life; be better able to develop the essential links between the political tasks and development work of the United Nations; and be better able to guarantee progress in the observance of human rights and international law — key elements for our Organization. A positive response will also allow us to energize relations between the principal intergovernmental organs — the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council — and it should allow a better balance to be struck between them.

Three other aspects of the report also deserve highlighting. First, as the Secretary-General says, the new global environment requires more systematic cooperation between the United Nations and all the other actors striving to promote political and economic security at all levels, whether regional organizations or even extra-State actors. In this regard, we encourage the Secretary-General, along with this Assembly, to continue to strengthen the dialogue between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

The Secretary-General also stresses the extreme gravity of the Organization's financial situation. As my Minister said from this rostrum last week:

> "The financial health of the Organization has not improved much over the course of the last year. Belgium believes that countries that accumulate arrears harm the entire international community. The damage goes beyond the resulting debt, because the Organization is denied the means fully to discharge its mandate. Furthermore, the reform process is jeopardized. Nothing can make up for the damage this does to international cooperation and social progress. The political and moral responsibility of those Governments is at stake. None who speak from this rostrum can claim their attachment to United Nations ideals without accepting the financial obligations involved in being a Member, that is, payment in full, on time and without conditions of their financial contributions." *(A/53/PV.10)*

Finally, Security Council reform is another exercise required by the comprehensive reform of this Organization. This delicate subject must be judged on its own merits. We need to avoid unproductive confrontation as well as to avoid putting off for ever this fundamental aspect of the reform process.

The report of the Secretary-General deals with a multitude of other questions that I have not dwelt on. I have merely sought to call attention to those questions that seemed essential to me. This was in no way meant to detract from other aspects of the report, which provides a very useful frame of reference for the activities of the United Nations and the work of this session of our Assembly. I would like to thank the Secretary-General, who I hope will next year take the same approach to the report.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I should like first of all to express the appreciation of my delegation to the Secretary-General for his excellent report on the work of the Organization. In general, we endorse the basic thrust of the report, which stresses a comprehensive approach to international peace and security on two fronts: the security front and the economic and social front. Permit me today to comment briefly on some of the important issues he has raised.

First, let me comment on the role of the United Nations in achieving peace and security in the new millennium. Japan agrees with the Secretary-General that it is important to transform the United Nations into a truly effective organization for the twenty-first century in order to cope with the new situation in which we are witnessing frequent regional conflicts. Towards this end we must simultaneously promote three avenues of endeavour: peace, development and United Nations reform.

In this regard, we appreciate the considerable progress that has been made in the area of the institutional reform of the United Nations. Japan believes it essential that reforms be undertaken in a balanced manner in three interrelated areas: the political area, the development area and the financial area. Let me underscore the urgent need to continue to make intensive efforts to push forward United Nations reform. In particular, the reform of the Security Council to ensure that it reflects the changes in international relations is essential for such a transformation of the United Nations into a truly effective organization for the coming century.

In dealing with regional conflicts, it is more important to focus on how to prevent conflicts than on how to settle them after they have broken out. Recognizing that economic and social development issues are often factors contributing to the outbreak of conflicts, Japan took the initiative of hosting the Tokyo International Conference on Preventive Strategy, to which

the Secretary-General referred in his report. At that conference participants underlined the importance of a comprehensive approach in addressing the factors that contribute to conflict prevention.

In this connection, the importance of arms control and disarmament cannot be overemphasized. Indeed, Japan is of the view that we urgently need to find a way to prevent the further proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. At the same time, to improve the effectiveness of this regime, it is important that nuclear-weapon States make sincere efforts towards nuclear disarmament. Efforts to deal with all types of weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, biological and chemical weapons — as well as conventional weapons, such as small arms and anti-personnel landmines, are also essential.

Like the Secretary-General, Japan regards development as the greatest challenge the world will face in the twenty-first century. It believes that we must deal not only with the economic development problems of developing countries, but also with the social aspects of development, such as those relating to human rights and good governance. The recent ministerial meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Africa amply highlighted the importance of economic and social development for the solution of conflicts and the maintenance of peace and security.

For the United Nations to be truly effective, it must be able to demonstrate that through its contributions the plight of Africa has improved. Japan, for its part, has been promoting a new development strategy. It will host the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II), together with the United Nations and the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA), later this month in Tokyo. Japan is pleased that the Secretary-General, together with many leaders from Africa and other regions, will participate in the Conference.

Japan also welcomes the Secretary-General's strategy to create a culture of communication to enhance the links between the United Nations, the media and civil society. We hope the Department of Public Information will play a leading role in implementing such a strategy to cultivate new international actors.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Japan's commitment to participate actively in discussions throughout this General Assembly session of various important points raised by the Secretary-General in his report.

Mr. Powles (New Zealand): May I say what a pleasure it is to speak under your chairmanship, Sir.

I wish to record my delegation's gratitude for the Secretary-General's report. It provides, succinctly and accurately, an excellent snapshot of where the Organization stands today. It also gives us signposts for the route ahead when it comes to deciding what kind of United Nations we, the Member States, want in the twenty-first century.

I will comment briefly on a key area of the report today. That is the "quiet revolution", as the Secretary-General calls it, to revitalize the organizational machinery. As the report makes clear, and indeed as we increasingly see for ourselves in our dealings with the Organization, a tremendous amount, with far-reaching and beneficial effects, has already been achieved in a very short space of time.

I want to convey New Zealand's appreciation to the Secretary-General and his senior officers for their unstinting efforts in addressing reform over the past year. Institutional changes, including the establishment of a Senior Management Group, the Executive Committees and the appointment of the Deputy Secretary-General, have brought about greater coherence in policy and planning and stronger direction within the United Nations. The development of productive relations with the Bretton Woods institutions has also been a major step forward.

The Secretary-General reminds us in his report, however, of three important reform measures that are the responsibility of this General Assembly. These are: time limits on new mandates, the Development Account and results-based budgeting. In respect of the last item, results-based budgeting, the Secretary-General rightly points out that its adoption is of the utmost importance to increasing accountability and efficiency in the Organization. In this, as in other reforms, I wish to assure the Secretary-General that he may count on my delegation's full support.

The Secretary-General's report covers a range of other ideas which my delegation will study with interest. For example, he touches on the possibility of strengthening linkages between the Security Council and

the Economic and Social Council, making greater use of Article 65 of the Charter.

I also want to refer briefly to the Secretary-General's comments on the importance of development. We are reminded in the report of the stark figures behind the current turbulence in financial markets, particularly in Asia. The report notes that 50 million people in Indonesia alone may be thrown back into poverty. This is a human tragedy in anyone's terms. The importance of turning around the decline in official development assistance takes on an added dimension when we are confronted with such a picture. It is important that donors respond positively to this call. I am pleased to record that New Zealand for its part has increased its official development assistance by 26 per cent in the last three years.

Finally, the Secretary-General's comments on globalization foreshadowed what would become the dominant theme of the general debate over the past two weeks. As the report points out, the new dimensions of the phenomenon can only be addressed multilaterally. It seems to my delegation there is overwhelming agreement on this score arising from the debate.

May I say that given the positive and forward-looking changes the Secretary-General has brought about in such a short time, we are confident that we have now an Organization that is increasingly able to address such issues even more effectively. The Secretary-General's "quiet revolution" has begun to pay important dividends for us all. He deserves our fullest support.

Mr. Galuska (Czech Republic): In his statement on 21 September, the Secretary-General, reporting on the work of the Organization, expressed the conviction that everybody had read his report from "cover to cover". This remark drew laughter from his audience, but the report he presented definitely deserves our appreciation and full attention. It is comprehensive and understandable and contains new ideas and suggestions.

While we welcome the achievements of the United Nations in many areas, we are aware that much remains to be done. The recent period has shown us how difficult it would be to overcome the stalemate in the Organization brought about by the cold war era and the North-South confrontation, and to create a new model of the United Nations, capable of dealing efficiently with the requirements of today's world and those of the future.

In this context, we applaud the Secretary-General's proposal for the Millennium Assembly, which gives us a unique opportunity to think about the concept of the Organization for the next century. As the year 2000 approaches, we should use the remaining time efficiently, preparing food for thought about what from now on should be one of our main tasks. We look forward to seeing the Secretary-General's proposals for the ways in which to meet the Organization's forthcoming challenges, and we await the recommendations expected to emanate from the "global town meetings".

We believe that if such meetings are to be fully beneficial to the United Nations it is essential that they be well focused. Relevant topics should be suggested by the Secretariat, and the meetings should be attended by the appropriate level United Nations officials. The Czech Republic will take an active part in this process, as expressed by the fact that the preparations for a conference called "Forum 2000" are under way in Prague. The conference is aimed at highlighting the global problems that mankind faces at the threshold of the twenty-first century.

In order to prepare for what lies ahead, we should expeditiously finalize the institutional reform and take action on the Secretary-General's deferred proposals, particularly on the specific time limits for all new mandates, the results-based budgeting system and the Development Account.

It is obvious that the reform measures that have been implemented are already bearing fruit. The new organization of the work programme and the new structure of leadership now manage cross-cutting and overlapping policy issues more effectively. The budget has been reduced. Bureaucracy is being streamlined, and the saved resources might be redirected to programme accomplishment. The new structure of management makes it possible to view the problems and their causes more clearly, from a broader perspective, thus enabling innovative solutions.

We should further elaborate on the idea of preventive peace-building based on the observation of the wide spectrum of causes of threats to human security and on the relationship between social justice, material well-being and peace. Interesting in this context is the suggestion to extend the Security Council's role to economic, social and development areas through closer cooperation with the Economic and Social Council.

We regret that the new approach in the area of disarmament has not yet been fully implemented. Nevertheless, the emphasis on the arms control agenda as essentially multilateral and the determination of the role of the United Nations as norm-setting are important steps in the right direction, as is the idea of strengthening and consolidating the principles of disarmament. In this context, let me express our support for the Secretary-General's idea of holding a United Nations conference on all aspects of the illicit arms trade in order to seek a global consensus on monitoring and controlling illicit arms transfers and their links with trafficking in other contraband goods.

As to peacekeeping, we welcome the effort of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to strengthen the Organization's capacity to respond swiftly, and we also welcome the significant progress achieved in the development of the United Nations standby arrangements system and the new promising concept of "smart sanctions".

The role of the United Nations in strengthening the international legal order is, in our view, of paramount importance and, as a matter of fact, truly indispensable for ensuring the rule of law, stability and the development of the global international community on the verge of the new millennium. In this year of commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the United Nations has continued to act vigorously in protecting and promoting human rights.

A genuine breakthrough in international law was achieved with the successful conclusion of the United Nations Diplomatic Conference on the Establishment of the International Criminal Court. The adoption of the Rome Statute is indeed of historic significance and now the challenge is to ensure that enough ratifications are made to enable the Court to be effectively established within a reasonable period of time. We find it particularly helpful that the Secretary-General tackles the issue of encouraging Member States to ratify the Statute.

But it would not be honest to start and finish my comments merely with compliments. On one point, my delegation feels that the report does not reflect properly what has been a common understanding in the United Nations for some time now. I am referring to the interpretation of the concept of sustainable development. Last year, the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly reconfirmed the results of the Rio Conference and stated explicitly that sustainable development is a balance of economic, social and environmental goals. However, the report seems to repeat the past confusion. In chapter II, sustainable development is contained as just one item under the heading "Cooperating for development" instead of being made, in accordance with the now dominant perception, a core concept of the whole development cooperation. Moreover, the picture of activities in this area is far too selective, giving only a few random examples.

In contrast to this, sustainable development appears in much greater complexity in another part of the report, in chapter IV, under the heading "The environmental dimension". No doubt, the concept of sustainable development has been largely inspired by environmental concerns, but we believe that the problem of equating "environment" with "sustainable development" has already been overcome. We would hope that future reports will treat such important areas of United Nations activities as environment and sustainable development in a more balanced way.

To conclude, let me strike a more optimistic note. If there is an area in which the United Nations fulfils our expectations, it is communications. Tremendous progress has been achieved here. Adding a new dimension to our daily interaction with the United Nations, as well as enhancing the links between the Organization, the media and the public, the United Nations Website has become an indispensable tool that will also be instrumental in paving the way for the future reform process.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to congratulate Mr. Opertti on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. Although my Minister for Foreign Affairs has already done so, I wished to congratulate him personally.

I wish first to thank the Secretary-General for his efforts in preparing the report contained in document A/53/1 on the work of the Organization. We fully support his efforts to strengthen our Organization's role.

Having read the report, we wish to express our appreciation of the fact that he has stressed the challenges to humanity, as he sees them. One issue that was a priority for which peoples and States sought to create this Organization and the League of Nations before it was saving the world from the scourge of war, which undermined security, terrorized innocent civilians and expunged the results of development efforts in many parts

of the world. Peace and security are the basis of everything and can be established only through the implementation of United Nations Charter provisions which call for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The world today can see a developing trend among certain Powers taking the law into their own hands, and bending it to serve their selfish interests, ignoring the destiny of other peoples. I cite the example of the missiles launched by the United States of America against the pharmaceutical factory in the Sudan. This is only the most recent example of this trend. As we cite it as evidence of that trend, we express our support for the efforts of the Secretary-General to promote international peace and security. In chapter IV of his report, he tells us that one of the United Nations basic missions is to prevent war. In return, we say to him that we still need the United Nations to undertake its role in that regard and to prevent aggression, by stressing the rule of law, not the rule of force.

The Secretary-General's efforts at reforming the Organization have been welcome and appreciated by all. We hope that our discussions and comments today will help him in his endeavours to strengthen the Organization's role as the world stands on the threshold of the new millennium. In this context, my delegation is of the opinion that the convening of the Millennium Assembly will be a milestone in the elaboration of a new vision for the future. We therefore urge that it be prepared in the framework of collective intergovernmental action. We also call for the emergence through that Assembly of practical and implementable goals for serving humanity as a whole. Otherwise, it will be just another ceremonial occasion.

Turning to the role of diplomacy, we fully share the Secretary-General's vision that it plays a central role in containing and preventing conflicts. However, my delegation agrees that, for preventive efforts to succeed, the consent of all parties concerned must be secured.

The Secretary-General touches on another important topic in his report: sanctions. In this context, if there is a need for sanctions, we advocate the observance of the following: First, they should not be used as an instrument to serve narrow interests or special political agendas; secondly, they should have well-defined goals; and thirdly, sanctions must be implemented and lifted in a specified time-frame, given their negative effects on all aspects of the lives of peoples.

As to human rights, our Organization is commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Meanwhile, however, one noble principle has yet to be implemented: the right of peoples to development. This right goes hand in hand with another matter that should be addressed in the framework of the Secretary-General's reform efforts in the human rights area, namely, the issue of double standards when dealing with human rights.

As to humanitarian assistance, we are of the opinion that the most important area of concentration should be to remedy the great deficiency in the resources devoted to humanitarian assistance. We also need more coordination in the efforts to achieve total transparency to meet the humanitarian needs of various regions of the world, including the Sudan.

In conclusion, I reiterate that we support the Secretary-General's efforts to enhance the role of the Organization and are fully prepared to contribute to any effort to strengthen the United Nations and enable it to meet the challenges of our times.

Mr. Babar (Pakistan): Like previous speakers, I would like first to thank the Secretary-General for presenting his annual report on the work of the Organization. The report covers a wide range of issues, including challenges before the United Nations in the new millennium and matters relating to peace and security, disarmament, sanctions, poverty eradication, social and economic development, refugee problems and administrative matters of the Secretariat.

We agree with the Secretary-General that conflict prevention should be one of the Organization's deepest commitments. Yet there is still too little emphasis on preventive action. In our view, conflict prevention cannot succeed unless the root causes of disputes are squarely addressed.

We agree that preventive diplomacy provides the best course in preventing costly conflicts. We commend the Secretary-General's personal contribution to the field of preventive diplomacy, particularly his visit to Baghdad earlier this year and the memorandum signed by him with the Iraqi leadership, which helped in defusing a potentially dangerous situation.

While we agree and share the Secretary-General's concern that the rising tension between India and Pakistan is a major cause of concern, in our view the Jammu and

Kashmir dispute deserved a more detailed reference in his report. With the nuclearization of South Asia, this issue needs greater attention by the international community, particularly the United Nations.

The Jammu and Kashmir dispute is the oldest dispute on the agenda of the United Nations. India's refusal to allow the people of Kashmir to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, is the root cause of the dispute, which has engendered conflict and tensions between Pakistan and India for the last 50 years. We therefore hope that the Secretary-General will continue his own efforts for the peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, and will reflect in detail the outcome of his efforts in his next report. Pakistan, for its part, will make every effort to find a negotiated settlement of the problem through the Foreign Secretary-level talks, which are likely to resume by the end of this month.

We fully share the Secretary-General's concern about the lack of progress in the Middle East peace process and escalating violence in Kosovo. We are also deeply concerned at the rising tensions between Iran and Afghanistan, and hope that the two countries will exercise the utmost restraint and will resolve their differences amicably.

Pakistan notes the Secretary-General's concern about nuclear developments in South Asia. We had proposed measures both bilaterally and in the relevant multilateral forums to keep South Asia free of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, India rejected all our initiatives.

Pakistan has also explained the rationale behind its own nuclear tests on several occasions in the past. The Prime Minister of Pakistan told the General Assembly on 23 September 1998:

> "Pakistan's nuclear tests were conducted not to challenge the existing non-proliferation regime, nor to fulfil any great power ambition. They were designed to prevent the threat or use of force against Pakistan." *(A/53/PV.12)*

Pakistan agrees with the view that peacekeeping can be a valuable tool for conflict prevention. Our own commitment to peacekeeping is based on a fundamental belief in the promotion of international peace, collective security, preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building. Pakistan believes that peacekeeping operations must have a clear political direction, a precise mandate and an effective command and control structure, as well as clearly defined and uniform rules of engagement. We also believe that no restrictive time limit or arbitrary "sunset" clauses should be imposed on peacekeeping operations. Efforts instead should be made to find just and durable solutions to long-standing problems and disputes, pending which ongoing peacekeeping operations should be fully and effectively maintained.

Pakistan is itself a beneficiary of one of the oldest United Nations peacekeeping operations, namely, the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), which continues to play an important role in maintaining peace and security in South Asia. We hope that the Secretary-General will agree to the strengthening of UNMOGIP to enable it to carry out its mandated tasks more effectively.

We deeply regret that on 27 September 1998 the Indian army fired upon an UNMOGIP vehicle across the line of control in Azad Kashmir. Pakistan is gravely concerned at this incident, which was ostensibly aimed at preventing UNMOGIP personnel from carrying out their peacekeeping work.

The Secretary-General's report gives the impression that the establishment of the headquarters of the United Nations Stand-by Forces High-Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) in Copenhagen was a United Nations initiative. Let me clarify here for the record that SHIRBRIG has not been mandated by the United Nations and is therefore not a United Nations initiative. If SHIRBRIG has to be created, it should be done by the United Nations and all Members should be asked to contribute towards this force.

We are fast approaching the new millennium. It should be our collective endeavour to make the next century an era of peace, progress and economic prosperity for all humanity. The goals of globalization and economic liberalization will be unattainable unless we evolve a level playing field in the emerging international system. We particularly need to develop a predictable international financial mechanism, reduce the gap between the rich and the poor, ensure a predictable flow of resources for national anti-poverty programmes and substantially increase external aid from its current levels. We believe that unless such urgent remedial measures are taken, the vision of globalization will remain only a dream.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate the Secretary-General on successfully carrying out his "quiet revolution" of institutional reforms. We hope that the appointment of the Deputy Secretary-General, the establishment of a cabinet-style Senior Management Group, the re-establishment of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the streamlining of the Secretariat through the redistribution of work and cutting of a thousand posts will contribute to the United Nations efforts to meet the challenges of the next millennium in an effective manner.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to begin by expressing my appreciation and thanks to the Secretary-General for his report *(A/53/1)* on the work of the Organization. May I take this opportunity to comment on some issues addressed by the Secretary-General in the report, which we find useful and informative.

Engaging with globalization seems to be an undeniable fact of our collective life today; for the past decade or so it has made itself felt to different degrees and in different forms in various areas of national life. While it may be some time before we all arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the intricate inner workings of this rather new process, there is no shortage of pain and anguish in various part of the globe as a result of its disquieting ripple effects.

We are all cognizant of the fact that powerful transnational forces are at work reshaping the key features of world markets in capital, goods, services, labour and technology. Likewise, we are aware that the twin processes of globalization and liberalization have expanded and deepened the mutual interdependence of societies, which has, in turn, increased the potential for international interaction and cooperation. No doubt this process has certain beneficiaries, which may even include some interests, groups and countries of the developing world. But the bulk of the developing world, particularly the least developed countries, is receiving the short end of the stick. The promises have yet to become reality, at least for most developing societies, but the negative consequences, mostly of a disruptive nature, are already part of their social, political and economic landscape.

The galloping pace of global integration in various fields and areas has substantially increased the degree of vulnerability in the developing world and made the element of uncertainty a part of its everyday life and of its future. Today for many developing societies marginalization and exclusion are not a distant possibility, but a very bleak tomorrow. As a practical outcome of the globalization process, the inequality between and within nations is increasing and the gap between poor and rich has widened.

What I have just briefly touched on deals with the reality of the situation, which should inevitably serve as our point of departure. This situation calls for a genuine and meaningful global partnership and strengthened international economic cooperation, with the objective of ensuring that the benefits of the ongoing process of globalization are spread to the maximum extent possible among all the actors at the global level, while its adverse and disruptive consequences are minimized and harnessed.

Ironically, while the need to strengthen international economic cooperation and establish an international trading system based on the principles of international law and recognized norms and regulations has been reiterated in most intergovernmental forums, recourse to unilateral coercive economic measures and the enactment of domestic laws with extraterritorial effects have been on the rise. Such policies and measures constitute a major barrier to free trade and the access of all countries to markets, and thus hamper the economic development and expansion of trade relations at all levels. Moreover, such measures contradict not only the basic principles of international law but also the goals and objectives for which the World Trade Organization was created.

Declining official development assistance is one of the main concerns of developing countries. The recent financial crisis and its adverse impact on the developing world has also seriously undermined the social achievements of most developing countries. Unfortunately, official development assistance, which is a major external source for financing development and a crucial input for infrastructure and social sector development in developing countries, has declined steadily throughout this decade.

The operational activities of the United Nations system are perhaps the function of the system with the most tangible outcome, and their range and diversity have increased considerably in response to the growing diversity of situations and demands in the developing world. International conferences have produced a broad consensus on development goals and policies, which should be followed up by the system on the basis of common objectives and coordination, as well as priorities of programmes and recipient countries. The main

objective of operational activities is to support and assist developing countries to enhance their capacity to address challenges and utilize their resources for taking advantage of existing opportunities in the global arena.

The major common priority for almost all developing countries is poverty eradication, which requires progress in such critical areas as population, children, health, food security, education, and cross-cutting themes, such as finance, trade, science and technology and human resource development. Currently, lack of core and general resources is the main impediment to the expansion and implementation of operational activities. The United Nations as a whole, particularly its programmes and funds, has gone through structural reforms to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Yet this process has not been matched by the necessary increase in contributions to core and general resources, as a basis for preserving the multilateral character of these programmes and funds. This is a serious challenge which should be tackled and addressed by the donor community.

Turning to humanitarian issues, I regard it as a matter of great concern that the international response to the need for humanitarian assistance has declined in both absolute and relative terms in recent years. There is a serious gap between humanitarian needs and available resources, which is widening year by year. Moreover, some donors continue to earmark their funds for specific activities. Such a trend could undermine the capacity of the United Nations system to respond and assist developing countries to establish early-warning systems, mitigate natural disasters and prepare for them, as well as in relief, rehabilitation and development of areas stricken by such disasters, particularly earthquakes.

The issue of refugees in the developing world also needs special attention. Presently the Islamic Republic of Iran is hosting the largest refugee population in the world, with more than 2 million refugees from neighbouring countries, especially Afghanistan. The impact of the influx of refugees into the developing countries is multifaceted; there is a serious adverse impact on economic and social development especially in the form of increased domestic unemployment rates and the imposition of a heavy burden on the domestic resources, infrastructure and environment of developing host countries. The efforts of host developing countries to face the challenges resulting from an influx of refugees from neighbouring countries should be supplemented by assistance from the international community. An inter-agency coordination mechanism is necessary to ensure sufficient assistance to developing host countries and also to provide essential services for refugees — in particular, women, children and elderly.

Turning to disarmament issues, I would like to welcome the establishment of two ad hoc committees in the Conference on Disarmament, referred to in the Secretary-General's report. The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that this development should serve as a step towards nuclear disarmament through discussions in the ad hoc committee on a fissile material cut-off treaty on the production as well as the elimination of all weapons-grade stockpiles of fissile material. We concur with the Secretary-General that the eight-nation joint declaration on creating a nuclear-free world is a positive development. Nonetheless, it is regrettable that despite such a promising initiative, and despite the wish of the overwhelming majority of Member States, the Conference on Disarmament failed to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

The Islamic Republic of Iran also welcomes the consideration being given to existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and to the establishment of such zones in other regions. It is imperative that the United Nations should stay at the forefront of international efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions where such zones do not exist, particularly in the Middle East, in accordance with the decision of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

I cannot conclude without echoing the Secretary-General's emphasis on the importance of the question of human rights. While the collective campaign of the world community to define, promote and protect human rights throughout the globe represents a great achievement by humanity at large, and needs to be cherished by all, the imperative of a balanced approach to all aspects of human rights, whether civil, political, economic, social or cultural, should not be theoretically underestimated or practically neglected. In this context, due attention and consideration need to be paid to the specific particularities of all societies.

Finally, I would like to reassure the Secretary-General and his staff of my delegation's sincere support and full cooperation for the betterment of the Organization in the year ahead.

Mr. Benítez Sáenz (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): We should like to thank the Secretary-General for his valuable report on the work of the Organization

and to congratulate him on its quality. The Secretary-General has given us a candid and lucid catalogue of the principal activities of the system. We consider the proposals and analysis that he has presented to be of great interest.

We commend the efforts being made, which are highlighted in the report, with regard to conflict prevention. Our commitment to that issue should continue to be one of the most steadfast that we undertake in this Organization. Preventing potential conflicts spilling over into violence requires early warning of potential crisis situations, adequate analysis, an integrated strategy and the political will and necessary resources to put that strategy into effect.

We note with interest the Secretary-General's initiative to invoke the Charter provision on an interrelationship between the activities of the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, taking into account that the latter is increasingly required to address the economic, social and humanitarian crises that threaten global security.

We fully share the Secretary-General's concern to make the eradication of poverty an intersectoral and key objective of the United Nations system, and we congratulate him on his work over the past year, during which the Organization has given support to more than a hundred countries in preparing, formulating and executing national programmes to combat poverty.

The report also stresses — rightly — that human rights issues should not be considered in isolation from the other activities of the United Nations; rather, as the Secretary-General has clearly indicated, they should be a common thread running through all activities. This Organization plays a unique role in defining and protecting human rights. We are happy that 1998, the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, has also seen the adoption in Rome of the Statute of the International Criminal Court, a legal instrument designed to do away once and for all with what Mr. Kofi Annan accurately describes as the culture of impunity.

We also agree in particular with the general approach taken by the report to the effect that the United Nations system should continue to act with firm resolve in the face of global threats such as the scourges of terrorism and drug-trafficking.

My delegation applauds the Secretary-General's vision in placing disarmament at the heart of the task of maintaining international peace and security. The adoption, at the end of 1997, of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction was a achievement that we can rightly describe as unprecedented, despite the fact that there have been significant advances in the disarmament area.

We agree with the Secretary-General that we are at a critical moment in our endeavours to reduce the danger of nuclear weapons. Humankind has not rid itself of the threat of nuclear annihilation. No less disquieting is the threat still presented by chemical and biological weapons.

Uruguay, as an important contributor to peacekeeping operations, is concerned to learn from the report of the Secretary-General that the total number of peacekeepers in the field has dropped since the beginning of the 1990s, even though the number of conflicts has not decreased proportionately.

We share the concern of the Secretary-General, as reflected in the report, that development continues to be a huge challenge for a world in which a fifth of humankind has to survive on just $1 a day. This brutal reality persists, despite the fact that in the past half-century we have seen one of the most widespread periods of economic expansion in history.

We are pleased to note that in the course of the last year, despite major financial constraints, this Organization has made real progress in the humanitarian field, providing high-quality assistance and mobilizing its resources to alleviate the situation of civilian populations in conflict situations while attending to the needs of displaced persons and refugees.

The challenge today, then, is not to resist or reverse the process of globalization, but to take advantage of all its positive potential and counteract its adverse effects. We agree with the Secretary-General that the United Nations today has the necessary legitimacy to do this and that strengthening it will assist in achieving these objectives.

Lastly, the quest for international peace and security will require complementary action on two fronts: security, where victory means freeing ourselves from fear and the socio-economic front, where victory will mean meeting basic needs. Only in this way can the United Nations continue to be the indispensable instrument to

achieve our common objectives and a unanimous expression of our common humanity.

Mr. Francese (Italy): I wish today to express Italy's sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for his impressive second report on the work of the Organization, a report which notes the already remarkable progress that has been made since the issuance of his first report, last year. Most of the reforms implemented by the Secretary-General during the first year of his term are now well in place, and his streamlining of structures is already starting to bear its first fruits. I fully trust that this trend will continue, and Italy looks forward to making its contributions to the ongoing discussion of how to make the United Nations better able to meet the challenges of the coming millennium.

In the area of disarmament, Italy welcomes the re-establishment of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, under the leadership of Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala, with his lifetime of active commitment to making disarmament issues a United Nations priority.

I will confine my remarks to only some aspects of the report.

Efforts to reduce the danger of nuclear weapons are facing a critical moment. Thus, Italy welcomes the establishment of two ad hoc committees in the Conference on Disarmament, one to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear explosive devices and the other to negotiate arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. To reach agreement on that issue, Italy supports the establishment in the Conference on Disarmament of a permanent dialogue between nuclear and non-nuclear States and, in terms of other types of weapons of mass destruction, we strongly supported the declaration of the informal ministerial meeting on negotiations towards the conclusion of the Protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention, recently issued in New York.

The approval of an "evolving" European Union code of conduct that would provide for an annual comparison and update of partners' policies in the crucial area of arms exports has been a positive step. Italy was particularly active in supporting this initiative and intends to contribute its ideas to the next stage: making the code a fully working reality. We think more energy should be dedicated to comparing and studying domestic procedures for arms export.

Furthermore, Italy is deeply committed to defining a more precise and effective international frame of reference on arms transfers, non-proliferation and the detection and prevention of the destabilizing stockpiling of weapons. In 1999, the review process of the initial elements of the Wassenaar Arrangement, chaired by Ambassador Luigi Lauriola, will start, and we expect it to contribute positively to the establishment of an international agenda on small arms and light weapons.

Peace and security figure among the priority responsibilities of the United Nations, and we are prepared to discuss the important issue of the reform of the Security Council under agenda item 59 of this session of the General Assembly. Today, I only wish to anticipate the reaffirmation of Italy's commitment to the reform of the Security Council. We strongly believe that the debate on the future of the Security Council pivots on the concepts of democracy and representation. Therefore, we will continue to be ready to pursue discussions in, and make our contributions to, the debate in the Open-ended Working Group in order to achieve the general agreement mandated in resolution 48/26, by which the General Assembly established the Working Group. We recognize the urgency of the matter but note the risk of making hasty decisions before a truly general agreement has been reached. As the President of the General Assembly rightly indicated in his statement last Friday at the conclusion of the general debate, the matter of institutional reform requires careful analysis, prudence and a spirit of cooperation, and it represents a process in which time is not the decisive factor.

On peacekeeping operations, Italy supports the efforts under way to promote standby arrangements, the documents for which Italy has signed, to provide the United Nations with a rapid deployment capacity. To strengthen every component of peacekeeping, the Secretariat, in response to the Fifth Committee's invitation, should first define the concept of logistic support as the frame of reference for all initiatives in the sector.

Within the framework of regional arrangements, we are closely following the endeavours of friendly African countries, and of the Organization of African Unity in particular, to improve the capacity to respond to and intervene in crisis situations on their continent. We look with favour on the possible creation within the United Nations of a support group to study such issues and offer concrete assistance to the African States.

With regard to sanctions, Italy fully shares the Secretary-General's emphasis on the need for a more humane and efficient sanctions regime. We welcome his reference to a more generalized use of targeted sanctions, following the models that have been adopted recently in Angola and Sierra Leone. Italy is convinced that the sanctions regime, as the Secretary-General's report stresses, should contain specific measures to introduce humanitarian exceptions in favour of the most vulnerable segments of the civilian population. In this respect, we support the conclusions recently adopted on this subject by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

In the area of development cooperation, Italy is pleased to welcome the implementation of the Secretary-General's reform proposals aimed at fostering greater internal coordination, streamlining procedures and rationalizing the activities of the Organization. In this context, we underline the positive results thus far achieved by the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs. The preliminary application of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in 18 pilot countries, and the more intense collaboration between the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations, are also producing encouraging results.

I recall that in 1997, 65 per cent of Italian development assistance was granted on a multilateral basis. Of this amount, 25 per cent was channelled through the United Nations, whose development programmes, especially in the poorest and least advanced countries, we deem a matter of top priority.

A more streamlined United Nations will make it possible to free resources and assure their more effective utilization for development cooperation, in particular for the priority objective of eradicating poverty. We appreciate the pivotal role that this issue has been given in the work of next year's session of the Economic and Social Council. Presiding over the Economic and Social Council next year, Italy will focus its efforts on renewing that body's role of coordination at the hub of the many United Nations activities in the social and economic sector.

As Italian Foreign Minister Dini stated in his recent address to the General Assembly, the recent financial crises affecting the world

> "shed light on an improper balance between the power of the market and the power of institutions. Globalization and liberalization certainly have great merits ... But a global market requires some measure of global government." *(A/53/PV.11)*

In today's climate, the United Nations has a unique role to play as a central point of reference, to help see beyond momentary euphoria and crisis and instead lay the foundations for a vision that is genuinely universal. In this context, we welcome the Secretary-General's reference to the dormant provision of Article 65 of the Charter regarding the relationship between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. In our view, Article 65 could provide a more effective tool for meeting the challenges of globalization.

With regard to humanitarian assistance, Italy welcomes the positive results achieved, especially in the field of coordination, through the establishment of the post of Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. We welcome the fact that for the first time the Economic and Social Council dedicated a segment of its substantive session in July to humanitarian affairs. We look forward to further enhancement of this line of action, and hope that it will be continued at next year's session.

Italy praises the Secretary-General's emphasis on strengthening the international legal order. The report rightly examines three main aspects: the human rights regime, the activities of the ad hoc international tribunals, and the recent establishment of a permanent International Criminal Court.

We share the Secretary-General's belief that the promotion of human rights should not be treated as something separate from the Organization's other activities. Rather, such promotion is an essential element of all United Nations activities, in particular those aimed at the maintenance of international peace and security, at every stage of their performance. We also welcome his appeal to those Member States that have not yet done so to ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The President returned to the Chair.

The two ad hoc tribunals, on former Yugoslavia and on Rwanda, have made substantial progress. The Secretary-General's report notes that, as of August 1998, the two courts had issued public indictments against

almost 100 people. The report also highlights the Rwanda Tribunal's recent decisions on the commission of the crime of genocide. These decisions represent the first judgements ever issued by an established international judiciary body on genocide, the gravest crime of concern to the international community as a whole.

This year, 1998, also saw the adoption, on 17 July, of the Rome statute of the International Criminal Court. The adoption of the statute of the Court is a landmark in the development of international criminal law. It constitutes a major achievement for the United Nations and for the entire international community. As Italy's Foreign Minister, Lamberto Dini, stated here two weeks ago,

> "The Rome statute to establish the International Criminal Court represents what is probably the greatest institutional advancement since the San Francisco Charter". (*A/53/PV.11*)

We are confident that the process of signature and ratification of the statute will advance rapidly in order to allow its quick entry into force.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/53/1?

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 10.

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Draft resolution (A/53/L.2/Rev.1)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolution A/53/L.2/Rev.1 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia): Let me begin by making a small correction to paragraph 6 of draft resolution A/53/L.2/Rev.1. The words "paragraph 4" should be replaced by the words "paragraphs 4 and 5".

I now have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, draft resolution A/53/L.2/Rev.1, entitled "Emergency assistance to Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Saint Kitts and Nevis". We are pleased to be associated with this draft resolution, which calls for support for Member States affected by the ravages of hurricane Georges.

Always at this time of the year, the island countries of the Caribbean pray for an uneventful hurricane season. Yet again this year, this was not meant to be. In the early morning hours of Sunday, 20 September, hurricane Georges began to unleash its fury, first in Antigua and Barbuda, then in Saint Kitts and Nevis. The battering continued in the tiny islands of Saba and Sint Eustatius. Next came the Dominican Republic and Haiti. But Georges had not finished its onslaught. It next hit Cuba and Puerto Rico. Not satisfied with its feast on the capital infrastructure and the fruits of the productive agricultural sectors of those islands, Georges moved to the south-east United States.

Although damage estimates are still coming in, the preliminary figures rest at over $200 million for Antigua and Barbuda, and over $400 million for Saint Kitts and Nevis, with the destruction of over 50 per cent of that country's agricultural sector. Usually a rather resilient crop, the sugar cane simply buckled under the 100-plus-mile-an-hour winds. The estimate is approximately $1.6 billion in the Dominican Republic and $1.2 billion in Haiti. In Cuba, the majority of damage was sustained in the agricultural sector. In the United States alone, the estimates have reached more than half a billion dollars.

Yet, beyond the dollars associated with the passage of the hurricane, Georges took with it approximately 500 lives: many people who were in their most productive years and still others who would have been barely old enough to remember Georges had they only survived.

The present draft resolution calls attention to this destruction and loss of life. It notes the enormous effort that will be required to alleviate the grave situation. It

recognizes the prompt response being made by Governments, agencies and bodies of the United Nations system, international and regional agencies, non-governmental organizations and private individuals. It requests assistance in identifying the medium- and long-term needs of the affected countries and in mobilizing resources. It also requests assistance in strengthening the disaster-preparedness and disaster-prevention capacities of the region.

In past experiences with such disasters, the quick response of friendly Governments and of regional and international agencies, such as the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Response Agency, the United Nations Disaster Management Team and the United Nations Development Programme — as well as of many non-governmental organizations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross — has been a welcome contribution to the efforts of the Governments of the affected countries. The countries affected by hurricane Georges are deeply grateful for the assistance provided thus far and for that which is still to come.

In this regard, special mention needs to be made of the offers of assistance from the Governments of Cuba and Argentina. The deployment of "White Helmets" out of Argentina and medical personnel and equipment from Havana are superb examples of the importance of South-South cooperation.

Before concluding, it is also my pleasure to all that, besides the Group of 77 and China, the following countries have expressed their desire to be sponsors of this draft resolution: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

Finally, the sponsors of draft resolution A/53/L.2/Rev.1 wish to thank all the delegations that contributed to its content and commend it to the Assembly with the hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Manz (Austria): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union.

The European Union deeply deplores the loss of life and the destruction caused by hurricane Georges in Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Saint Kitts and Nevis and other countries and territories of the region. The European Union recognizes the medium- and long-term effects of the disaster, which require the efforts of national and international agencies and private initiatives to provide relief. The European Union has contributed generously to support these efforts. The European Union would like to thank the sponsors of this draft resolution for their cooperation, which has led the Member States of the Union to co-sponsor it.

Mrs. Cornette (Guyana): Guyana, currently chairing the group of Caribbean Community (CARICOM) delegations in New York, has the particular honour to speak on this item regarding draft resolution A/53/L.2/Rev.1, entitled "Emergency assistance to Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Saint Kitts and Nevis".

We urge the unanimous adoption by the General Assembly of this draft resolution. This timely action bears testimony to the support and solidarity of the international community for the Governments and the peoples affected by hurricane Georges, which left in its wake a path of death and destruction. CARICOM Governments have a special concern for the affected countries, which are mainly sister States of the Caribbean region and which include member States of the Caribbean Community.

We extend from this rostrum our sympathies to the Governments and the peoples of Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Saint Kitts and Nevis on the tragic loss of life and the destruction of property. We pledge our full support and solidarity to them in the important task of facilitating relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction. In demonstration of their concern, several Caribbean Governments have already begun to respond by providing various forms of assistance.

I wish also to place on record CARICOM's sincere appreciation to those Governments and institutions within the United Nations system that have readily responded to the plight of the victims of this disaster. We look forward to the continued support of the international community for the efforts of the affected countries to help themselves towards recovery.

Finally, it must be said that the disaster of hurricane Georges has once again underlined the extreme vulnerability of small developing States and the need for special consideration of their conditions. The fragility of their ecosystems and economies makes them particularly

susceptible to the forces of nature and of the global economy. We therefore call on the international community to renew its solidarity and its support for the long-term sustainability of these States as we prepare for the review in 1999 of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

Mr. Tchoulkov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian delegation attaches great importance to questions of the strengthening of United Nations coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance.

We express our solidarity with and support for the Governments and the peoples that have been affected by hurricane Georges. The Russian delegation would like to state its decision to join the sponsors of the draft resolution entitled "Emergency assistance to Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Saint Kitts and Nevis" (A/53/L.2/Rev.1).

I would like to draw the Secretariat's attention to the fact that in the Russian translation of the draft resolution, operative paragraph 4 does not include all the names of the countries on whose behalf it is to be adopted. We would like to ask the Secretariat to correct that mistake.

I would like to take this opportunity to declare the solidarity of the Russian Federation with the resolution adopted last week entitled "Assistance to Bangladesh the wake of the devastating floods". For technical reasons, our delegation was unable to become a sponsor of that resolution at the time of its adoption. We wish to say today that we support that resolution and we ask that this be reflected in the record of this meeting.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/53/L.2/Rev.1, entitled "Emergency assistance to Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Saint Kitts and Nevis".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/53/L.2/Rev.1?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/1 B).

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the representative of Antigua and Barbuda.

Mr. Lewis (Antigua and Barbuda): On behalf of all the countries affected by this most unusual hurricane — Georges — I wish to express my thanks and gratitude for the overwhelming support that the resolution has received.

This hurricane was not in intensity as severe as Gilbert, Hugo or Louis in recent years, but it followed a path from off of Cape Verde and never diverged from the course the computers predicted it would take. Normally, when there is a hurricane, a list is made of the islands or countries that might be hit. But this hurricane hit all of the countries they said it would. Not only that, but Georges went through all the different language areas. It hit the Dutch-speaking territories of Sint Eustatius and Saba; it hit the Spanish-speaking countries of Cuba and the Dominican Republic; it hit the French- and Creole-speaking country of Haiti; and it hit the English-speaking countries of Antigua and Barbuda, and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

In one country, as much as 80 per cent of the housing stock was destroyed. In every country numerous people were left homeless. And it seems to me that the Assembly needs to be thinking in terms of the future in preparing a special fund for small island developing countries, because our vulnerabilities are numerous. For 45 years the country of Antigua and Barbuda did not witness a hurricane; in the past three years it has had three hurricanes.

Beyond that, there are other vicissitudes in the territories of the Caribbean. These include volcanoes — an active one in Montserrat, one rising off of Grenada, others in Saint Vincent, Guadeloupe and other areas of the Caribbean. We are thus in a precarious position and location, and that is why we have to constantly reiterate our vulnerabilities.

Once again I not only express my thanks but also plead that special consideration be given to the development of a fund which we can activate quickly when these emergencies arise.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 20.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.

United Nations A/53/PV.29

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-third Session

29th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 6 October 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Address by Mr. Festus Mogae, President of the Republic of Botswana

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Botswana.

Mr. Festus Mogae, President of the Republic of Botswana, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Botswana, His Excellency Mr. Festus Mogae, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mogae: Mr. President, allow me at the outset to express great pleasure at seeing you preside over the work of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly. We are confident that under your able leadership the work of this session will be an unmitigated success. I can assure you of the cooperation and support of my country's delegation throughout your stewardship of this session.

Allow me also to pay a well-deserved tribute to our indefatigable Secretary-General and his staff for the efforts they are making, often under very trying conditions, to give meaning and concrete expression to the lofty ideals enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. They deserve the full support and cooperation of all Member States and their peoples.

As we approach the next millennium, we are fully conscious of the omnipresence of war and of the havoc it continues to wreak upon peoples in literally every continent of the world. It is true that local wars have so far not posed a serious threat to international peace and security, but by some accounts they have already killed and maimed more people than both world wars combined. And judging by the number of those who are killed in them and other attendant consequences, these wars, whatever their cause, are a living reality for those who fight in them and for the innocent people who are caught in the cross-fire. The conclusion we can draw is that not all succeeding generations of humankind have been spared the scourge of war in accordance with the promise made over 50 years ago by the founding fathers of this Organization. In terms of human history, 50 years is a relatively short time. It is, however, long enough to make the judgement that present-day human beings, like their predecessors in history, have failed to unlearn the ways of war — or rather to acquire the skills to live with one another like good neighbours.

The presence of war and conflict among and within nations has often drawn a great deal of criticism to the United Nations, as if it had a magic wand to resolve every problem brought to its doorstep. True, there is room for improvement in the performance and efficacy of the United Nations. Certainly, the genocide in Rwanda

98-85997 (E)

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in 1994 could have been avoided with more determination and foresight.

Unfortunately, in awarding themselves certain extraordinary powers, the framers of the Charter built certain imperfections into the Organization which have proven to be serious encumbrances to its efficiency and effectiveness on conflict resolution. So long as this Organization remains the creation of the nation-State system with its in-built self-interest, it cannot be expected to perform differently. But we can certainly improve its delivery system to acceptable levels. Notwithstanding the imperfections of the United Nations, its continued existence is in the national interest of all Member States, whatever their claims to the contrary. Otherwise, Member States which felt they benefitted the least would long since have withdrawn their membership. Member States should therefore commit themselves to the payment of their contributions to the budget of the United Nations when they fall due, without any conditions.

Ideally, the United Nations should have developed machinery to address and avert conflict situations before they actually occur. However, in the world in which we live, the ideal and the real do not often dovetail. Preventive diplomacy should quickly be succeeded by robust peacekeeping as soon as it is determined that a conflict situation is not amenable to resolution through dialogue. Preventive deployment has been put to use successfully in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the separation of belligerent forces has also been put to successful use to contain the otherwise explosive situations in Cyprus and Lebanon.

The African experience in peacekeeping has been slightly different. In most cases, conflicts have smouldered and festered to calamitous proportions on our continent as a result of international inertia — or should we call it "Africa fatigue"? Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Great Lakes region and other cases are illustrative in this regard. African States are ready and willing to bear their fair share of peacekeeping operations on the continent, but they are certainly lacking in logistic and financial wherewithal. While there is ample scope for improvement in African peacekeeping capacity, Africa has over the years acquired practical experience both in the field and through cooperation with other countries. Thus, Africa has a relatively sophisticated capacity to carry out peacekeeping responsibilities.

I must admit that it hurts my pride as an African to hear that African conflict situations dominate the agenda of the Security Council. This is a dubious honour, if indeed it is an honour at all. It must, however, be acknowledged that African problems are problems of the international community. They are problems of the United Nations, whose Charter is categorical in allocating primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. That responsibility was bestowed in trust. It cannot be shirked for political expediency in any part of the world. African conflicts deserve equal attention by this Organization, to which all African States belong and pay their dues, however modest. They cannot be left to the Africans alone to resolve.

If I have devoted a great part of my address to the role of the United Nations in crisis management and in the defusing of tensions, it is not because I am oblivious to other equally pressing issues of our times. Crises and tensions, by their very nature, presuppose a lack of security, movement of people and, very often, deep-rooted intolerance. Evidently, when people raise swords against their neighbours, the humanness that is innate in all people is replaced by the bestiality that lies latent in every person. It is incomprehensible how the perpetrators of acts of genocide and other serious crimes against humanity manage to live with their consciences or to lead normal lives after such heinous criminal activities.

The establishment last summer of the International Criminal Court will, we hope, help to ensure that perpetrators of acts of genocide, crimes against humanity and other inhuman acts will not go unpunished. The International Criminal Court will also, we hope, act as a deterrent for those intending to commit such serious crimes. The conviction by the Rwanda Tribunal of two leading personalities involved in acts of genocide in Rwanda in 1994 has also served notice to would-be perpetrators of similar acts that the international community can no longer tolerate their diabolical acts.

Human rights abuse is equally intolerable and immoral. Institutions dealing with human rights should be empowered to deal with the perpetrators of human rights abuses with the full force of the law. Human rights abuse has been responsible for the bulk of the horrendous conflicts that have ravaged societies in all continents throughout this violent century. We therefore could not agree more with the Secretary-General when he says in his annual report on the work of the Organization,

> "If individual rights are not protected, the whole of society suffers. Personal freedoms are however rendered largely meaningless by civil wars, or by

economic, social or cultural deprivation — often, indeed, by a combination of all these". (*A/53/1, para. 171*)

Therefore, in this, the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the community of civilized nations to which we all belong must reaffirm its commitment to the human rights ideals enshrined in the Declaration and to their determination to live up to those ideals.

Globalization and economic liberalization have brought about unprecedented expansion in world trade and commerce, but they have also accentuated the imbalances in international economic relations. The vast majority of countries, particularly in Africa, continue to face marginalization in the world economy. The problem is further compounded by the fact that official development assistance has fallen to unprecedentedly low levels.

In Africa, armed conflicts have impacted negatively on development prospects. Corruption has also been one of the biggest obstacles to development. There is, however, reason for optimism. The majority of African countries have instituted reforms to achieve economic growth and development, including the application of sound macroeconomic policies, good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights. They have taken serious measures to introduce budgetary reforms, remove restrictions on current payments and restrain credit and monetary expansion. Over the past few years Africa's economic performance has been on an upward trend. In 1997 close to 60 per cent of the African countries registered growth rates in excess of their population growth rates, and about half of this number posted annual economic growth rates of more than 5 per cent.

Africa, however, still needs active support and assistance from the international community. We clearly recognize that it is the primary responsibility of the Africans themselves to reduce the marginalization of their continent from the world economy. But for Africa to achieve any tangible success and emerge from the conditions of poverty and underdevelopment a new type of partnership with the developed world is required to increase trade and the continent's share of global prosperity. African countries need improved access to world markets, greater flow of foreign direct investment, technology transfer and an increase in official development assistance.

The decline in official development assistance needs to be reversed. Similarly, external debt is a problem requiring urgent attention. In fact, the debt burden continues to be one of the main obstacles to economic growth and development. The new initiative adopted by the Bretton Woods institutions to reduce the multilateral debt of the heavily indebted poor countries is a welcome development, though its implementation has been very disappointing and painfully slow. Botswana believes that the only viable solution to the debt problem faced by the poorest countries is outright cancellation of the debt.

The main objectives of Botswana's development strategy are employment creation and poverty alleviation. Lack of income is the most immediate cause of poverty among our people. Employment opportunities have increased significantly in the last few years, but the rate of unemployment is still unacceptably high. To improve the situation, Botswana has over the past few years undertaken measures to create a favourable environment for investment, including the encouragement of small and medium-scale enterprises. I am confident that with the support of our development partners our efforts will bear fruit.

Before I conclude my statement, let me say a few words about recent events in southern Africa. On 16 September 1998 there was an attempt to put an end to the constitutional order in the Kingdom of Lesotho by overthrowing a democratically elected Government. Junior officers in the Lesotho Defence Force mutinied and arrested their senior officers, including the army commander. Government employees, including Cabinet Ministers, were stopped from going to work, which resulted in a complete collapse of the administrative order in the country. Criminal activity and lawlessness became the order of the day. There was no doubt that Lesotho was on the brink of widespread violence and total chaos.

The crisis was most alarming because of its wider implications for peace and stability in the whole subregion of southern Africa. No effort was made by those involved to heed the calls for peaceful dialogue. Under the circumstances, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) could not remain indifferent. Therefore, on 21 September 1998 members of the Botswana Defence Force and the South African Defence Forces entered the Kingdom of Lesotho in response to an appeal for such intervention by the democratically elected Government of Lesotho. The intervention is aimed at assisting the people of Lesotho to create conditions conducive for them to address their

differences in a peaceful manner. Our action conforms strictly to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the resolution of the 1997 Harare summit of the Organization of African Unity which condemns the overthrow of legitimate Governments by the military.

I wish to assure the Assembly that the military intervention by Botswana and South Africa in Lesotho is motivated solely by a sincere will to establish conditions of peace and security in our sister country. We are dealing with a difficult, complex and rapidly changing situation. As such, our forces shall remain in Lesotho for as long as necessary to restore public order and the rule of law.

With regard to Angola, it has become increasingly clear that the leader of UNITA has no intention that it shall meet its obligations under the Lusaka Protocol. Given the renewed upsurge in violence caused by UNITA, SADC has come to the conclusion, regretfully, that Mr. Savimbi must be held personally responsible for war crimes that his movement has committed, and continues to commit even after it has signed a peace agreement. The people of Angola have suffered for far too long and it is time that this fratricidal war, which has devastated the country, was brought to an end.

Across the border from war-weary Angola, another SADC country is going through a painful process of national rebirth, rudely interrupted two months ago by a rebellion which, even as we meet here, is ineluctably sapping the residual energy of a devastated country. The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo deserve a break. Through the timely assistance rendered by three SADC countries at a time of great peril, it is our fervent hope that the Democratic Republic of the Congo will soon resume its process of rebirth and do so in peace and tranquillity.

Let me conclude by assuring you, Mr. President, and the nations gathered here that Botswana's faith in the United Nations as the universal repository of the hopes and aspirations of all mankind remains as strong as ever. We will continue to work assiduously for the enhancement of the efficacy of the Organization, to help equip it for the arduous tasks that lie ahead.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Botswana for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Festus Mogae, President of the Republic of Botswana, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 85

Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

Commemorative meeting marking the fiftieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping

Draft resolution (A/53/L.5)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The General Assembly will now hold the commemorative meeting marking the fiftieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping operations, in accordance with the decision taken at its 3rd plenary meeting, and pursuant to Assembly resolution 52/69 of 10 December 1997.

I am greatly honoured and deeply satisfied to preside over this ceremony commemorating 50 years of peacekeeping operations.

This is much more than a pro forma exercise. It represents the feeling that inspires us all when we contemplate the important role these operations have played in our quest for international peace and security. Equally important, this occasion should be a time for reflecting on the present and future of this kind of United Nations intervention.

Peacekeeping operations range from monitoring elections to the verification of respect for human rights, as well as measures to re-establish institutions, when necessary, and restore services affected by war, violence and instability.

Hundreds of thousands of troops from many different States have participated in 49 such operations, on every continent, since 1948, and more than a thousand military and civilian personnel — including, in 1961, the Secretary-General of the Organization himself, Dag Hammarskjöld — have lost their lives. All of this proves that there are many special aspects of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary, which is a milestone in the history of the United Nations.

Naturally, a great deal has been said and written about the legal nature and status of peacekeeping

operations, and the doctrinal and political debate continues in the light of the new forms that these operations are assuming.

At first, interposition by military units and civilian observers under the auspices of the Organization, and at the request of the States involved, in order to quell or limit hostile actions, verify compliance with ceasefire agreements or contribute, as an impartial observer, to possible negotiations was accepted as a legitimate implementation of the letter and spirit of Chapter VI of the Charter. This was so even when the use of troops armed with light weapons introduced a modality not unlike the measures provided for in Chapter VII, a situation that inspired Dag Hammarskjöld to say, in a felicitous turn of phrase, that peacekeeping operations came under "Chapter VI and a half" of the Charter.

During the cold war, on the basis of the conceptual framework I have described, a number of peacekeeping operations were established that helped to ward off more than a few conflicts that threatened international peace and security. The universality implicit in the composition of these operations lessened national sensitivities and even limited the concept of State sovereignty, while facilitating dialogue and negotiations between the parties involved.

The end of the bipolar international order created a proliferation of localized armed confrontations of diverse and complex origin, which presented the United Nations with new and difficult challenges. Many internal conflicts, which generally also had international implications, were accompanied by grave threats to human rights and by catastrophic emergency situations. These conflicts occurred at a time when the United Nations was reaffirming its commitment to safeguard these fundamental values.

It was then, at the end of the 1980s — and it is worth noting that in 1988 the United Nations received the Nobel Peace Prize — that the Member States authorized and encouraged the implementation of new forms of peacekeeping operations, later formalized by the Security Council, following the guidelines in the Secretary-General's Agenda for Peace, in 1992. These changes included an emphasis on preventive diplomacy and the deployment of troops before hostilities. Thus, 36 of the 49 peacekeeping operations undertaken by the United Nations were organized between 1989 and 1998. However, these figures do not in themselves illustrate the qualitative element of these operations.

First of all, we saw an extension of the field of application of peacekeeping operations to certain internal conflicts: the parties' consent was no longer essential and the mandates of the operations were considerably broadened to include a number of political, institutional and administrative aspects of the States or parties involved. In general, the golden rule of not opening fire except in self-defence was made more flexible, by force of circumstance, to meet the need to protect displaced and suffering civilian populations or to ensure their survival through the delivery of emergency supplies.

Also noteworthy has been the growing intervention of coalitions, acting with the support of the Security Council, as well as action taken by regional organizations pursuant to the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter.

A number of failures in peacekeeping operations have given rise to criticism. It has been pointed out that there is a need to establish more precise mandates, to define frameworks for action more clearly, and to provide the operations with sufficient means and resources. This premise makes it essential for Member States to meet their financial obligations fully and on time.

On a more general and substantive plane, many countries still have reservations about the growing tendency to have recourse to peacekeeping operations and about the expansion of their mandates. These countries invoke the fundamental principle, enshrined in Article 2, paragraph 7 of the Charter, prohibiting intervention in the internal affairs of States.

The truth, however, is that, beyond the reasonable caution that should govern the administration of peacekeeping operations — which, after 50 years, may be considered an essential institution in the functioning of the United Nations — there is a clear consensus that they should be strengthened as an effective tool for maintaining peace and contributing to the ideal of a world in which human rights are respected and the universal duty of humanitarian assistance prevails.

The Member States whose representatives are gathered here understand that peace and the values I have just mentioned are the very *raison d'être* of the United Nations. On their behalf, it is my duty as President of the General Assembly to recognize the pioneers of the peacekeeping operations and to pay sincere homage to all the participants, many of whom are represented here. I also wish to voice our satisfaction at the excellent work

of the Secretariat in this respect and to pay a heartfelt tribute to the memory of the heroic officials, soldiers and civilians — including some from my country — who paid with their lives because we, the peoples, were determined to achieve a better world based on peace and justice.

These ideas and feelings are, in my opinion, fully reflected in the text of the Declaration. I should like to recommend that it be adopted by acclamation. I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: Today it is my great honour to commemorate with the Assembly the fiftieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping — the fiftieth anniversary of the year when soldiers were sent onto the battlefield under a new flag, with a new mission: a mission of peace.

It would be no exaggeration to say that that mission was without precedent in human history. It was an attempt to confront and defeat the worst in man with the best in man; to counter violence with tolerance, might with moderation and war with peace.

That mission has earned its place in history as the first example of what has come to be known as peacekeeping. Ever since then, day after day, year after year, United Nations peacekeepers have been meeting the threat and reality of conflict, without losing faith, without giving in and without giving up.

Since 1948, there have been 49 United Nations peacekeeping operations. Thirty-six of those have been created since 1988, the year in which United Nations peacekeeping was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Well over 750,000 military and civilian police personnel, and thousands of other civilians, from 118 different countries, have served in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Fourteen thousand peacekeepers are serving this very day.

No figures, however, can do justice to the ultimate sacrifice that more than 1,500 peacekeepers have made over this half-century. Today we pay tribute, above all, to the brave Blue Helmets who gave their lives in the cause of peace. Whatever success we have had is owed to their sacrifice, their dedication and their heroism.

I am grateful and particularly honoured to announce that later today I shall bestow on three of our fallen peacekeepers, in the presence of their families, a new Medal named after one of them: Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld.

The United Nations, forged from the battles of two world wars, was dedicated, above all, to the pursuit of peace and, in the enduring words of the Charter, to saving "succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Undoubtedly, peacekeeping falls fairly and squarely within the spirit of that pledge. Yet you will search in vain in the Charter for any specific provision for such operations.

Peacekeeping, from the start, has been an improvisation. To my mind, that is one of its great merits. It proved, and continues to prove, that the United Nations is not a static or hidebound Organization, but a dynamic and innovative one. Indeed, peacekeeping has been one of many activities through which the United Nations has shown its ability to adapt to circumstances, to find its way around obstacles and to make itself relevant to the actual problems at hand.

Not that the evolution of United Nations peacekeeping — from patrolling clearly marked buffer zones and ceasefire lines to the far more complex, multidimensional operations of the 1990s — has been either smooth or simple. Often the expectations placed on peacekeepers have outstripped the resources given to them. Often the demands made of them have cruelly ignored the realities on the ground.

Over the decades, we have had some unmistakable successes, such as Namibia, Mozambique and El Salvador. We have also found ourselves maintaining calm in some seemingly intractable stalemates, such as Cyprus and the Middle East. In some places — Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia — we have found ourselves standing by, in impotent horror, while the most appalling crimes were committed. There the limits of peacekeeping were graphically demonstrated. We learned, the hard way, that lightly armed troops in white vehicles and blue helmets are not the solution for every conflict. Sometimes peace has to be made — or enforced — before it can be kept.

We yield to no one in our regret and our pain over those calamities: the loss of life, the wanton destruction of towns and villages, the shredding of the very fabric of humanity which, in normal times and places, allows men and women of different ethnic origin to live peacefully side by side. We will for ever measure our proudest achievements against the memory of those worst days.

But that does not mean we succumb to the fatalism of those who would rather stay at home when conflict rages and fellow human beings are suffering in a distant

land. That is the cynic's answer, and that is the coward's solution. It is not ours.

We are not here today to declare victory. We cannot claim that peacekeeping has been the answer to every conflict; still less, alas, that it has prevented the recurrence of genocide. What we can and do claim proudly is that, in the first half century of their existence, United Nations Blue Helmets have saved tens of thousands of lives.

In recent times the pendulum may appear to have swung away from the support of United Nations peacekeeping. But I have no doubt that history will see it as one of the Organization's most important and lasting contributions to international peace and security.

The mission of United Nations peacekeeping must continue. Too much remains to be done; too many innocents are dying even as we speak, for us to think of leaving the field now.

Peacekeeping's promise, after all, was never to end war. Peacekeeping is not the same as peacemaking. It can help prevent, or at least delay, recurrence of conflict. It can be used, as we have shown in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, to help prevent conflict from breaking out in the first place. Above all, it gives time and space for conflict resolution: it gives peace a chance. If the chance is not taken, the peacemakers are not to blame.

Isaiah's words,

> "they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more", (*The Holy Bible, Isaiah 2:4*)

will never be more than an ideal for humanity. If, in our service as United Nations peacekeepers, we can help make that ideal more true than false, more promising than distant, more able to protect the innocent than embolden the guilty, we will have done our part.

The will to peace must exist among the peoples and the parties, but the path to peace is one that we, the United Nations, can help pave. We have done so for the last 50 years, and I am confident we can continue to do so in the coming century.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the representative of Nepal, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Shah (Nepal): On this solemn occasion marking the commemoration of 50 years of United Nations peacekeeping, I should like to pay the tribute of the member States of the Asian Group to the more than 1,500 peacekeepers who have made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives in the service of the United Nations. They have displayed courage, idealism and motivation of the highest order.

Our homage is also due to the thousands of other peacekeepers who have suffered physical disability while in the service of the Organization.

On behalf of the Asian Group, I would like to express our gratitude to the 14,500 military and civilian police personnel who are currently serving the cause of peace in the 17 ongoing peacekeeping missions of the United Nations around the globe today.

It is my great honour, on behalf of the Asian Group, to welcome the presence in this Hall of the families of the first recipients of the newly instituted Dag Hammarskjöld Medal, the late Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, Commandant René de Labarrière and Count Folke Bernadotte — the martyrs of peace who have been and shall remain a source of inspiration.

It is also my honour to recognize the presence at this commemorative meeting of former Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, former Under-Secretaries-General, Assistant Secretaries-General, Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Deputy Special Representatives, force commanders, chiefs of staff, chief military observers, military advisers, civilian police commissioners, Headquarters and field staff of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, as well as of several former peacekeepers. To all of them, thousands of others who could not be here and those who have already left us, the Asian Group owes a debt of gratitude for a job well done.

Peacekeeping is a unique United Nations concept under which troops are deployed not for purposes of war, but to provide a foundation for peace. In its primary role in the maintenance of international peace and security, peacekeeping has been, and will remain one of the essential tools of the United Nations. Fifty years after the mandating of the first peacekeeping operation,

peacekeeping continues to be adapted to changing needs and is becoming increasingly multidimensional. We are satisfied that efforts continue to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to respond rapidly to demands for peacekeeping and to improve the overall management of peacekeeping missions.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the representative of Poland, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Wyzner (Poland): It is indeed with a sense of great honour and pride that I take the floor today on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States — honour, because I am addressing the General Assembly convened on the most solemn occasion: to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping; and pride, because the idea of adopting the declaration to pay special tribute to those who have been keeping peace all over the world, at the request and on behalf of all the Members of the United Nations, originated in the Group I am representing today whose two members, Ukraine and Poland, authored the original draft declaration.

The initiative I am referring to was not put forward by mere chance. It emerged as a reflection of both the commitment of the members of the Group of Eastern European States to the ideals enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the high measure of their commitment to the Organization's peacekeeping activities.

The members of our Group have consistently been among the leading troop contributors. Their national contingents constitute today more than 12 per cent of the total military strength of United Nations peacekeeping operations and currently serve in all but two of them. One of the members of the Group, Poland, has for some time been the biggest United Nations troop contributor.

Occasions like today's call for reflection. Let me share some with the General Assembly. It is important to realize how indispensable United Nations peacekeeping has become in the course of 50 years of its history. Our Organization's mechanism for maintaining international peace and security would have been indeed incomplete and not properly equipped had it not been for the peacekeepers' readiness to answer a call of the Security Council.

Having turned 50 and accomplished so much since its inception, United Nations peacekeeping, in order to remain as relevant and useful as it has always been, is bound to further evolve. What we are dealing with today is sometimes quite distant from the original concept of peacekeeping. Contemporary operations tend to be highly complicated multidimensional undertakings, involving not only military, but also civilian specialists, and are often carried out in cooperation with regional organizations or arrangements, humanitarian organizations and numerous other agencies. Their mandates include far more than traditional peacekeeping alone. In fact, a distinct change seems to be under way, leading to wider participation of United Nations peacekeeping in post-conflict peace-building in all its variety.

Much remains to be done to prepare the Blue Helmets to shoulder this kind of responsibility and we all, Members of the United Nations and its main bodies alike, have our part of the task to fulfil. The 50 years of United Nations peacekeeping provides us with a wealth of experience to draw from. This experience is both positive and negative. The former does not necessarily give us complete guidance for operating in today's frequently unusual circumstances; the latter, painful as it may be, should never be forgotten while preparing future operations.

In this context, let me mention one particular issue which should be kept constantly at the centre of our attention: the safety and security of United Nations peacekeeping personnel. We strongly believe that measures must be taken to prevent vicious, deliberate assaults on the soldiers sent by the United Nations to assist others in containing and resolving conflicts and to provide both military and civilian personnel with adequate protection. One of these measures should be the early entry into force and universal acceptance of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

Thanks to the years of outstanding service and its unquestioned accomplishments, United Nations peacekeeping is known to millions of people throughout the world. For many of them the very presence of soldiers wearing blue helmets generates hope and the conviction that they are not being abandoned to war and atrocities.

Three quarters of a million soldiers delegated by their respective Governments have been carrying out the mandates assigned to them by the Security Council. Fifteen hundred and eighty-one of them have made the ultimate sacrifice in our common endeavours to maintain peace and security. We bow our heads in tribute to their memory.

We also pay tribute to all their comrades-in-arms who are represented here by the group of former peacekeepers. Their service is highly appreciated. The honours and prizes they have been awarded, including the Nobel Peace Prize in 1988, have been richly deserved.

Let me express our special gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his unique contribution and leadership both at the helm of this Organization and earlier as the head of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

In conclusion, may I assure the whole General Assembly that the members of the Group of Eastern European States will do their utmost to further develop and strengthen the United Nations peacekeeping potential, a precious instrument at the disposal of the international community in its quest for peace and security.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of the Dominican Republic, who will speak on behalf of the States of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Ms. Aguiar (Dominican Republic) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is a great honour for me to speak on behalf of the States of Latin America and the Caribbean on such a very special occasion for the United Nations, the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of peacekeeping operations.

Over the last 50 years, the countries of our region have not remained indifferent to United Nations peacekeeping activities. We must highlight the fact that our countries are participating in 12 of the 17 current operations. Some of our members, such as Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Uruguay, have been contributing staff for more than 40 years. The region I have the honour to represent has traditionally solved its differences through peaceful means. According to the Secretary-General's 1998 report, the Organization currently has six peacekeeping operations deployed in Europe, four in the Middle East, four in Africa, two in Asia and only one in Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti. Thus, I am able to state that our region has traditionally contributed more personnel than it has had to receive on its territory.

Latin America and the Caribbean attach great importance to all the processes, ranging from preventive diplomacy to post-conflict peace-building. This is shown by the fact that our participation in peacekeeping operations is not limited to sending military and police troops. Mexico and Colombia belong to the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General for Guatemala, while Argentina, Chile and Venezuela belong to the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General for Haiti.

In terms of troop contributions, there is no distinction between large and small countries. In fact, in 1995 Uruguay contributed the largest number of troops from our region. The Caribbean Community countries showed a spirit of solidarity in participating in the United Nations operations in Haiti. Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago all had a presence there. El Salvador, Ecuador and Cuba have contributed to other missions, while Brazil figured prominently in the peacekeeping operation in Angola. Bolivia and my own country have shown interest in contributing troops in the near future.

The experience of Latin America and the Caribbean in peacekeeping operations is growing daily, not only in the field but also through courses for troops and military observers that are given in the regional training centre whose headquarters is in Buenos Aires, and in other similar centres, such as the one in Montevideo. Often, these courses enjoy the participation of staff from centres of other regions.

The United Nations, as an honest and neutral broker, remains an essential factor in peacekeeping and confidence-building. To be effective, peace missions require the full consent and cooperation of the parties to the conflict and must always remain impartial and have a clear mandate. But States must support these efforts by providing qualified staff and the necessary financial resources. The United Nations can only be as effective as we, the Member States, allow it to be.

The Security Council has been discharging its mission in the process of creating peacekeeping operations. Since 1994, there have been visible indications that the Member States are working with a more harmonious approach as regards peacekeeping missions. Guidelines and parameters have been defined for the creation or extension of operations. We must also recognize that the degree of transparency has increased in the Council and that consultations with contributing countries have begun to take place. This wholesome process, which we approve of and welcome, is the outcome to a great extent of proposals originating in countries of our region. In that context, I would like to

recall the words spoken by the Permanent Representative of Chile when those consultations with troop-contributing countries were institutionalized:

> "Troop-contributing countries have the right to be heard by the Council, and this right must be recognized *de jure* and not only de facto."

Fifty years after the first deployment of Blue Helmets in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, I would like to conclude by voicing, on behalf of Latin America and the Caribbean, sincere appreciation and homage to all the men and women who have given their lives in silent and humble service under the flag of this Organization.

The Christian holy book says,

> "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace". (*The Holy Bible, Isaiah 52:7*)

The mention of feet alludes to the vocation for service. Let us celebrate these messengers of peace.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Andorra, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Minoves-Triquell (Andorra) (*interpretation from French*): The Group of Western European and other States is gratified to be able to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Since 1948, more than half a million individuals — nearly 750,000 persons — have contributed to these operations, serving the ideals of peace and progress that men and women of goodwill bequeathed us in the Charter of the United Nations, in the wake of the horrors of the Second World War.

It is fitting for us to pay tribute today to all of those guardians of peace, most of them anonymous. How many wars have been avoided thanks to their courage, how many lives saved by their sacrifices? It is to them that I speak, on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, to express our sincerest gratitude.

Allow me also to recall here, in particular, the more than 1,500 of our fellow human beings who gave their lives so that peace could prevail over war. These are human beings who epitomize love and all the best that humanity has to offer. Their ultimate sacrifice reminds us that human beings are capable of great altruism in the face of suffering and of calm when faced with the destructive passion of armed conflict, even at the risk of their own lives. This is a promising sign for the human race in the third millennium.

The Medal in memory of Dag Hammarskjöld, who himself perished in the service of the Organization, is a tribute established by the Security Council to the eternal memory of those who, within the United Nations, are engaged in the maintenance of peace. The Group of Western European and other States warmly congratulates the families of Commandant René de Labarrière, Count Folke Bernadotte and Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld on their well-deserved awarding of this medal. May the light of their good works guide us down the long road of peace!

(spoke in Spanish)

During these 50 years of peacekeeping operations, the member States of the Group of Western European and other States, along with many other Member States of the United Nations, have made available men and women, as well as important resources, to serve these operations.

(spoke in English)

In a world that has to deal every day with the conflicts revived by the end of the cold war, it is important that these operations continue and progress. It is also essential that people who participate directly in these operations be guaranteed their safety in the field. The agents of peace who received the Nobel Prize in 1988 must find respect everywhere, for without them, war and conflict become savagery.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of the United States, speaking on behalf of the host country.

Mr. Burleigh (United States of America): Fifty years ago, the United Nations committed a handful of military observers to the cause of peace in what would become the first United Nations peacekeeping operation. In the spring of 1948, after two world wars and centuries of conflict, the world saw soldiers used in the service of peace. Together with their civilian colleagues, these soldiers opened a new chapter in international affairs. In these 50 years, our peacekeepers have continued to

provide peace to the many people suffering the ravages of war and violence.

For more than five decades, the United Nations has taken on the difficult challenges to peace throughout the world. During this time, our peacekeepers have prevented wars, saved lives and inspired hope across the globe. It is a noble record, unparalleled in history, and a tribute to those who have so unselfishly served.

It is fitting, at this time, that we remember our peacekeepers — men and women, young and old, military and civilian — who have sacrificed their lives in the service of peace. Dag Hammarskjöld wrote that one should "seek the road which makes death a fulfilment". United Nations peacekeepers have sought the right road, and their efforts and sacrifices have not been in vain, for they have fallen so that others may live in peace. The true memorial to their sacrifice is the peace they helped create, the lives they helped preserve, and the promise they helped sustain in order to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

As we commemorate the achievements of 50 years of peacekeeping under the colours of the United Nations, let us not forget the continuing missions and daily sacrifices of our peacekeepers in the field today. May they prevail and overcome the many obstacles they face. May their families, their nations, and the United Nations support them as they serve far from home and country. Daily they are quietly pursuing peace, and for that we thank them.

Our commemoration must not end today, for there is much unfinished work. Let us honour our fallen peacekeepers with deeds, not words. Let us continue, both here and in the field, with our efforts to improve peacekeeping. We can do this, and must do this. Let us recommit ourselves today, as our peacekeepers have, to the service of peace.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on the representative of South Africa, who will speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Mr. Vermeulen (South Africa): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement at this commemorative meeting marking the fiftieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping. On this special occasion, the Non-Aligned Movement wishes to pay tribute to all the men and women who have, over the past 50 years, served as peacekeepers around the world under the United Nations flag. We honour the memory of all those among them who have sacrificed their lives in the pursuit of peace. We add our voice in welcoming the establishment of the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal as a tribute to those who have made the highest sacrifice while serving in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

While the Non-Aligned Movement fully recognizes the importance of United Nations peacekeeping efforts, there is a need for a comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping. This matter received prominent attention at the Non-Aligned Movement summit meeting which took place in Durban, South Africa, only last month.

The Non-Aligned Movement affirms its commitment and willingness to provide full support to United Nations peacekeepers to ensure that they are able to fulfil the tasks entrusted to them. Yet when we look back at 50 years of United Nations peacekeeping, let us remind ourselves that durable peace is ultimately dependent on the elimination of all facets of the causes of conflict.

Peacekeeping is a support tool in the maintenance of international peace and security, which is a responsibility that must be shared by all of us. In this regard, the Non-Aligned Movement would once more like to stress the need for regular and institutionalized consultations between troop-contributing countries and the Security Council, because this is an important step in confidence-building, transparency and partnership.

Contemporary peacekeeping is increasingly multidimensional and requires a more effective approach to coordinating the core military tasks with humanitarian assistance. As the Non-Aligned Movement has stated in the past, dealing with challenges posed by this multidimensional nature of peacekeeping will still require of us the ability to differentiate between peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance.

This differentiation also needs to be extended to cover civilian policing, whose role is increasingly crucial. I would like to recall the decision of the Non-Aligned Movement on this matter highlighting the urgency of developing agreed guidelines on the principles governing the role of civilian police personnel in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Several Non-Aligned Movement member countries are among the largest and most consistent contributors of troops to United Nations peacekeeping. On this occasion, the Non-Aligned Movement wishes to underscore the

importance of resolving the question of delays in the reimbursement of troop costs and contingent-owned equipment leases, which have caused hardship to all troop- and equipment-contributing countries.

In conclusion, I would like to assure the Assembly of the non-aligned countries' commitment to peacekeeping and to assure it that the Movement will continue playing a constructive role to enhance United Nations peacekeeping through the United Nations Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, which is the competent forum with the mandate to comprehensively review the whole question of peacekeeping in all its aspects.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Nigeria, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States and as Chairman of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

Mr. Gambari (Nigeria): It is a happy coincidence that the General Assembly, at this fifty-third session, will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and that today it is commemorating 50 years of United Nations peacekeeping. There can be no peace without fundamental freedoms, and human rights cannot be exercised in an atmosphere of national chaos and conflict. Perhaps more than others, we Africans appreciate this linkage, especially in view of our recent history of struggle against colonialism and apartheid and the unfortunate reality of persistent conflicts in our continent. For this reason, we in Africa, as part of the international community, are strongly committed to both the promotion of human rights and the preservation of world peace and security.

Today's commemoration of 50 years of United Nations peacekeeping operations is an opportunity for both celebration and reflection. As we assemble here, men and women in uniform, wearing the blue helmets of the United Nations, are out in the field, putting themselves at risk in the service of international peace and security. We salute their courage and their commitment. We also recognize that when States Member of the United Nations deploy their peacekeepers to conflict situations, this is a reaffirmation of their full commitment to the promotion of international peace and security. In ascribing the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace to the Security Council, the Charter of the United Nations also demands that its Members establish and maintain the very essence of the very peace that Governments seek to establish: the promotion and protection of the political, economic, cultural and social rights of the individual, the community and society as a whole.

African States have been major beneficiaries of United Nations peacekeeping, but it must also be remembered that African States have made significant contributions to international peacekeeping efforts. We have sent troops, observers and civilian police, some of whom have made the ultimate sacrifice. We have also provided force commanders for some of the United Nations peacekeeping operations — some of whom are here with us today — and we have for the most part paid our assessed contributions for peacekeeping.

Moreover, since 1993, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has played an increasing role in the resolution of conflict in our continent. The OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution is Africa's response to the United Nations Agenda for Peace. It is a clear acceptance on the part of the OAU member States of their responsibility to be proactive and supportive of the maintenance of international peace and security, especially in their continent.

A few years ago, the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity agreed, within the context of their cooperative efforts, that there was an urgent need to enhance cooperation in the area of conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution. They agreed, *inter alia*, that, first, the interrelationship between human rights, democracy, security, stability and development in Africa necessitated effective cooperative action between them. The United Nations Agenda for Peace has provided both organizations with the opportunity to render even greater service in a manner consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charters of both the United Nations and the OAU.

Secondly, they agreed that the OAU could play a constructive role in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts in Africa, but that the United Nations should assist the OAU to establish and strengthen those structures and procedures which would enhance its capabilities to settle disputes and prevent conflicts. This was in fact endorsed by the Security Council when it discussed the situation in Africa last year, and again as recently as last month.

Finally, we believe that the cooperation in the area of international peacekeeping between the United Nations and the OAU should be further strengthened and

enhanced for the benefit of both Africa and the world. While we insist — and we will continue to insist — on the Charter provision that it is the Security Council which has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security everywhere, there are in fact instances when the OAU has a comparative advantage in helping prevent, manage and resolve conflicts in our continent. For instance, the OAU members are closer to conflict situations in the continent, possess greater knowledge of the causes of those conflicts and often demonstrate greater political will to solve their own problems. In addition, OAU and subregional peacekeeping efforts are cheaper than those of the United Nations. Moreover, subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community have demonstrated the will and the capacity to respond to the challenges of peacekeeping and peacemaking in our continent. Nonetheless, regional and subregional organizations require logistic and financial support from the international community in order to be effective partners with the United Nations so as to meet the complex and growing challenges of peacekeeping in the post-cold-war era.

Speaking now in my capacity as Chairman of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution (A/53/L.5) that is before the General Assembly, the annex to which contains the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of United Nations Peacekeeping.

At a time when peacekeeping faces great challenges and plays a crucial role in the maintenance of international peace and security, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations believes that it is most fitting that we should mark the fiftieth anniversary of peacekeeping through the adoption of a formal declaration.

Through the Declaration before the Assembly, which was initiated by Ukraine but drafted and supported by the entire Special Committee, the General Assembly would pay tribute to the hundreds of thousands of men and women who have, in the past 50 years, served under the United Nations flag in almost 50 operations around the world.

We would also honour the memory of more than 1,500 peacekeepers who have laid down their lives in the cause of peace, and in this regard, would welcome very warmly the establishment by the Security Council of the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal.

Above all, we would reaffirm our commitment to provide full support to the peacekeepers of the United Nations, to ensure that they can successfully fulfil the tasks entrusted to them by Members of our Organization.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We will now proceed to a decision on draft resolution A/53/L.5, entitled "Fiftieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping".

Before we do so, allow me to respectfully welcome Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, an eminent Latin American who served from 1982 to 1991 as Secretary-General.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/53/L.5?

Draft resolution A/53/L.5 was adopted (resolution 53/2).

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): This concludes the commemorative meeting marking the fiftieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.